

President's Corner Gimme an "M"...

by Janet Millenson

Recently the Frederick Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society became the Frederick County Bird Club. More than two-thirds of our chapters now have similar names. Let's be honest—the average person probably finds our formal moniker a bit intimidating, so a "friendlier" name may attract more members. But the state organization is more than the sum of its chapters. Does our name describe who we really are?

MARYLAND: This part seems pretty obvious. We're Maryland birders who study and enjoy the birds of Maryland. Our annual conference is held in Maryland, we have sanctuaries around the state, and many MOS members keep bird lists for Maryland and its counties.

Yet our community doesn't end at the state line. Plenty of MOS members live elsewhere—Virginia, D.C., Delaware, a dozen other states, even overseas. Some are former residents, some are just

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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A CHRISTMAS (COUNT) PRESENT: TOWNSEND'S WARBLER

It was a dark and dreary morning, and the three Montgomery County Christmas counters were just starting out along the C&O towpath on the nearly 4-mile hike from Noland's Ferry to Point of Rocks in Frederick County. Almost immediately they were halted by the flurry of a small flock, primarily chickadees and kinglets. Then Claire Wolfe, a California transplant, raised a puzzled voice: "If I were in California, I'd say this was a Townsend's Warbler."

Sector leader Lydia Schindler and Jeff Gould quickly got their binoculars on the bird, which flitted short distances within the same tree. Even in the gray light, its yellow breast was striking. So was its strong facial pattern. They called out field marks. "Yellow supercilium." "Black throat." "Heavy black streaks on the sides." "Speckled vent." While Lydia kept her glasses trained on the bird, Claire and Jeff quickly flipped through a National Geo field guide to rule out any more likely possibilities. Their conclusion: It had to be a Townsend's Warbler.

The three watched as the little bird moved around in the tree. In another half-minute it flew to a tree further north and then headed across the towpath in the direction of a large stone building. They chased after it, but the warbler, and most of the small flock, had disappeared. The trio paused to make notes of what they had seen. Then, elated by their find—but unaware that a Townsend's Warbler would be a state first—they



Townsend's Warbler spotted on Montgomery County Christmas Count. Photo courtesy of George Jett.

headed north in the off-and-on rain. Along the way, they carefully checked out the several mixed flocks they met; kinglets were especially numerous, as were Brown Creepers. But even Yellow-rumped Warblers were in short supply.

Back in the parking lot, drying out and warming up in the car, Claire, Jeff, and Lydia collaborated on a Rare Bird Report form, complete with a simple drawing. And at the Tally Rally at Black Hill RP, Lydia and Claire reported their find to an incredulous audience. (Bill Hill quipped, "You'll never get it accepted by the Voice of the Naturalist,"—i.e., Lydia.)

Once the sighting was posted on MDOsprey, the buzz began. First thing Tuesday morning saw a cluster of birders at Noland's Ferry: Hans Holbrook, Dave Powell, Barbara Gearhart, Gary Smyle. The morning

(Townsend's Warbler continues on page 2)

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (continued from page 1)

was gray and foggy, and it took half an hour of searching, but around 8:15 Hans spotted the bird. Within minutes, Jim Stasz was posting "Townsend's Warbler: Yes!" on MDOsprey, and birders began to stream toward Noland's Ferry.

Over the next four days, the warbler held court. Sometimes it traveled with a flock, sometimes alone. Often it moved high in the bare trees. Sometimes it ran along thicker limbs (somewhat like a Black-and-white Warbler, several observers noted). Sometimes it disappeared for an hour or two, even longer, adding excitement to each rediscovery.

On Wednesday, January 4, the warbler showed up a little after 8 a.m. and it was seen off-and-on under overcast skies until about 2:30. On Thursday, January 5, it showed off in the sunlight and lingered as late as

4:30. Friday, January 6, was another overcast day. Birders began arriving at 7 a.m., but the warbler didn't make an appearance until 10:30. It disappeared, was resighted a couple of times, then disappeared again. Birders worked the area through the afternoon, "looking at every kinglet, chickadee, nuthatch and yellow-rump time and time again," wrote Paul Pisano. "At 4:40, with the sun just about to dip below the horizon, we were about to throw in the towel, [but] at 4:42 the bird appeared out of nowhere and . . . showed well for about 11 minutes. . . . Then it took off, gave a high, thin 'seep' note, and flew downriver over the trees."

That, as things turned out, was the Townsend's Warbler's farewell performance. Saturday, January 7, saw an estimated 60 birders out searching, and more came on Sunday, but the bird was not to be seen again.

Maryland's "Next Ten"

In the fall of 2001, 15 of Maryland's most avid and experienced birders were asked to predict the likeliest additions to the state checklist. The panel's choices have proven remarkably prescient. The MD/DC Records Committee has already accepted records for #1, European Collared-Dove, and #8, Reddish Egret, and they are currently reviewing reports for #2, Cave Swallow, and tied-for-#3, Townsend's Warbler—as well as other runners-up: Northern Lapwing, Calliope Hummingbird, and Neotropic Cormorant.

A Townsend's Warbler, wrote Marshall Iliff in the *Yellowthroat*, "could appear in a winter chickadee flock on some birdy CBC." [You can access the Next Ten list, as well as a link to Marshall's crystal-ball-gazing, at <http://www.mdbirds.org/birds/mdbirds/nexten/nexten.html>.]

The Maryland Yellowthroat

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by March 15, 2006 for the May/June 2006 issue.

Illustrations pages 1, 2, 10, and 27

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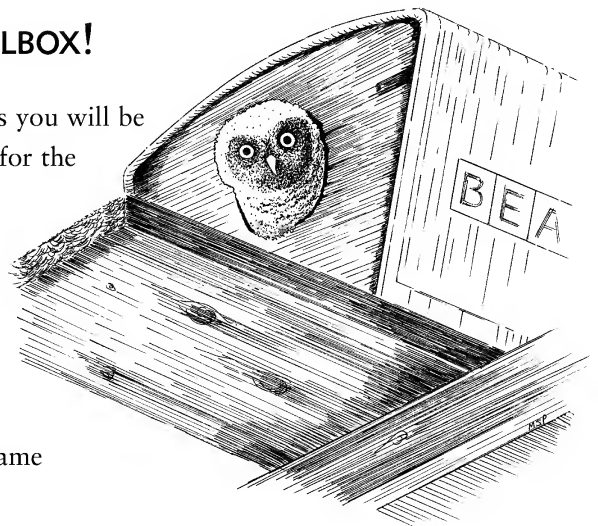
FOCUS ON THAT MAILBOX!

Sometime in the next few weeks you will be receiving registration materials for the 2006 MOS Conference:

- June 9-11
- Rocky Gap Lodge, Allegany County
- Keynote speaker: Tim Gallagher of Ivory-Billed Woodpecker fame

To help out with the conference:

- Field trips: Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@broadband.net
- Artists' exhibit: Dale Johnson, 410-867-7743 or ckadj@juno.com
- Raffle and silent auction: Maryanne Dolan, 202-483-8188 or abtrowbridge@msn.com





ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH, DEAR FRIENDS: THE FINAL ATLAS SEASON

BY WALTER ELLISON

*We few, we happy few, we band of birders;
For they to-day that shed their blood with me
Shall be my siblings, be they ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle their condition:
And birders in Maryland now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their life lists cheap whiles any speaks
That sought out nesting birds with us in this great second Breeding Bird Atlas.*

—With apologies to the Bard of Avon
[Henry V (IV, iii)]

Well, here we are: the final field season of this effort. We've come a long way, and it is wonderful indeed to have a breather and take in the view from this point on the mountainside, but we must shoulder our packs again and climb that last steep pitch to the summit. For summit this mountain we must. We still need to fill in the gaps in our work—fortunately they are small; we need to top off certain blocks, and we need to strive to find those elusive bird species that probably have lost ground to development and environmental change but need our best detective work to demonstrate that the losses we publish are the truth.

Here is a list of some of the key tasks that lie ahead of us:

1. Many night birds need work, especially American Woodcock, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Whip-poor-will.
2. Some blocks need a lot more work to approach their 1980s totals. More than 430 blocks have a reviewed species total that falls more than ten species short of the 1980s level, and there are 14 blocks that officially lack any reviewed atlas data. Atlasers should take initiative and contact county coordinators to offer to help get lagging blocks up to speed. I have sent a map to each county coordinator showing the status of blocks relative to their 1980s totals, and they should have a good idea of where work is needed. The list of county coordinators may be found online at <http://www.mdbirds.org/atlas/coord.html>.
3. What bird species were in your block in the 1980s that you have yet to find this time? You can look up blocks at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm> by selecting the Maryland and D.C. 2002-2006 project from the "In Progress" projects listing, then look up data "by block" at the project data page. When you check this list, you may notice birds that may still be found somewhere in your block. This will allow you to formulate a plan for seeking these birds. I expect many blocks will not reach their full 1980s totals, especially in counties that had meticulous coverage in the 1980s, but we should try to get within ten species of previous totals.

In conclusion, we all should be ready to go as hard as we have in any of the last four years so that we shall have a book (we intend to produce a book with a supplemental data disk) that we all will be proud to hold and thumb.

President's Corner *(continued from page 1)*

neighbors who enjoy birding here. We welcome the support of everyone who appreciates Maryland's wonderful natural resources.

Our activities don't end at the state line, either. As its name implies, the MD/DC Records Committee keeps the official bird list for the District of Columbia as well as for Maryland. The 2002–2006 Breeding Bird Atlas also includes D.C. plus miscellaneous bits of the states around us. Chapter field trips often visit hot spots beyond our borders.

ORNITHOLOGICAL: Ornithology is the scientific study of birds. MOS is honored to have many accomplished scientists among our members, some with national and even international reputations. I stand in awe of dedicated field researchers who brave mosquitoes, ticks, oppressive summers, icy winters, travel, and tedium to collect data on the status of Maryland wildlife and habitats. Check your shelf of birding books and notice how many essential reference volumes were written by MOS members.

On the other hand, the majority of us are just enthusiastic amateurs, eager to share knowledge. No Ph.D. is required to excel at locating, identifying, or photographing birds. And vital scientific endeavors such as the Atlas project and the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts rely on "citizen scientists" like us to gather essential data.

SOCIETY: Founded in 1945, MOS has a scientific and educational mission that qualifies us for federal tax exemption as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We organize hundreds of programs and field trips, hold a three-day annual conference, publish books and journals, administer sanctuaries, sponsor research, and provide expertise to state and local agencies on a variety of conservation issues.

But banish any image of stuffiness. There are plenty of informal get-togethers, too. MOS activities have been the start of countless lasting friendships (and more than a few romances). If you're an MOS member, wherever you go birding in Maryland you're likely to run into some familiar faces. Our shared interest draws people of all ages and from all walks of life.

So as our name implies, MOS is the scientific authority on the birds of Maryland. We're also a lively organization of dedicated birders. Thanks for being a part of it!

The Conservation Connection

By Maureen F. Harvey



Controlling Geese at Kingman Marsh

The 600 resident Canada Geese at Kingman Marsh, a 40-acre tidal wetlands on the Anacostia River near RFK Stadium in Washington, DC, are fast converting the lush habitat that supports a diversity of plants and wildlife into a bare mudflat. The \$5 million effort to restore the wetlands has been a model of cooperation by the DC government, National Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, and the nonprofit Anacostia Watershed Society. Over the past three years, these allies have tried all known non-lethal methods of controlling the goose population, to no avail. They now propose more drastic measures. Copying an approach successfully used in Minneapolis and Seattle, they want to round up geese during late summer feather molt and ship them to a poultry processing plant. They wish to educate the public and gain support and approval for this plan before the 2006 molt. In December 2005, the MOS Board voted to support the plan to use lethal methods to control this goose population.

Action Alert: Urge Support of Healthy Air Act

For nearly 30 years, Maryland's seven oldest coal-burning power plants have been exempted from the strictures of the Federal Clean Air Act. The Healthy Air Act, now before the MD legislature, would require these plants to install modern pollution control technology to reduce four main pollutants: nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, mercury, and carbon dioxide. According to the Maryland ECO System's website (<http://mdecosystem.e-actionmax.com/default.asp>), these seven plants are responsible for 77% of sulfur dioxide, 66% of mercury, 31% of nitrogen oxide, and 31% of carbon dioxide released into the air that we breathe every year. Not only does dirty air negatively affect the health of all living things, power plant emissions contribute to coastal land loss and flooding due to climate change, to the dead zone in the Chesapeake Bay, and to mercury contamination of our seafood. In contrast to the Healthy Air Act, the Clean Power Rule favored by MD Governor Robert Ehrlich and Constellation Energy would continue the exemption for the three smallest plants and eliminate the regulation of carbon dioxide emissions for all seven.

In 2005, seven Eastern states joined to form the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which has fostered inexpensive ways for power plants to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The Healthy Air Act encourages Maryland to join the RGGI. Make your voice heard by writing, calling, or e-mailing your Maryland delegates and senators and telling them to support the Healthy Air Act. See your phone book or visit <http://mlis.state.md.us/> for your legislator's contact information.

Horseshoe Crab Moratorium Gains Momentum

In an important step forward, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has agreed to consider a 2-year moratorium on the take of horseshoe crabs from Delaware Bay by NJ and DE. In late 2005, MOS had signed on to an American Bird Conservancy (ABC) letter encouraging such a moratorium.

This step is crucial for the conservation not only of horseshoe crabs, but also of the shorebirds that rely on horseshoe crab eggs as an important food source during migration. Recent overfishing of horseshoe crabs has led to a population crash of both horseshoe crabs and the Red Knot, such that scientists predict that without conservation action, the Red Knot could become extinct in less than 10 years.

In January 2006, MOS signed on to another ABC letter, this one favoring legislation in the VA House of Delegates that would declare a moratorium on landings and importation of horseshoe crabs in VA until the Red Knot *rufa* subspecies reaches its target population of 240,000 birds. The letter let VA's elected officials know the legislation has country-wide support.

Mexican Grasslands Appeal Moves Forward

The Bird Conservation Alliance, the new conservation action offshoot of the ABC, has launched an international fundraising effort, "Saving the Saltillo Savanna." The goal is to purchase and conserve Mexican grasslands that support key populations of imperiled migratory species, such as Long-billed Curlew and Mountain Plover, as well as the last remaining Worthen's Sparrows. ABC has pledged to match all donations up to \$20,000. Chapters looking for a good cause to support are encouraged to join other BCA member groups in making the Mexican Grasslands appeal a success. Organize a fundraiser such as a birdathon, Big Sit, auction, dinner, or private party. Contact BCA director Alicia Craig (acraig@abcbirds.org) if you'd like help getting an event started.

FCC Must Act to Prevent Avian Mortality at Towers

MOS signed on to an ABC letter to let the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) know they need to take action to stop the killing of birds at communications towers. The FCC has received extensive information documenting that communication towers are a significant and continuing source of mortality to migratory birds. Still, it has refused to act, despite the availability of simple measures that could prevent mortality, such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Tower Siting Guidelines. ABC and partners have steadfastly attempted to convince the FCC to act, but lawsuits, administrative tower appeals, other filings, and many meetings have gone nowhere, while thousands of new towers have been erected.

ECO ECONOMICS

Environmental activism has many complexions, among them using economic arguments to persuade nay-sayers of the value of preserving our planet's resources. This was the theme of a November 12, 2005 meeting sponsored by the Maryland Conservation Council, entitled "The Cost of Not Protecting Maryland's Environment." The keynote speaker was Dr. Robert Costanza, an environmentalist and economist from the University of Vermont who is well known for his provocative ideas regarding the valuation of our natural resources and the costs of *not* protecting the environment. His environmental viewpoints were reinforced by panel members Dr. Donald Boesch (Maryland Conservation Council) and Steve Bunker (University of Maryland). These speakers frequently referenced the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)*, conducted under the auspices of the United Nations from 2001 to 2005.

Dr. Costanza argues that the purpose of the economy is to provide for the sustainable well-being of people, not merely the value of goods and services exchanged for money. This goal encompasses material well-being as well as quality of life and the sustainability of both. There is much scientific evidence that people who focus on material consumption as a path to happiness are actually less happy than those with a more balanced perspective. Dr. Costanza contends that there are four basic types of capital necessary to support the "real" economy: built capital (market economy), human capital (health, knowledge, other human attributes), social capital (formal and informal networks among people), and natural capital (the world's ecosystems, from local to global).

A key word used throughout Dr. Costanza's lecture was "sustainable." He provided evidence (echoed in the MA) that, since 1975, man has been using up the earth's natural resources faster than the earth is able to resupply them, and our natural abundance is not sustainable at our current rate of consumption. One example of a potentially unrecoverable resource is cod; overfishing depleted cod stocks to the point that an entire industry collapsed in the 1990s, endangering a species and putting tens of thousands of people out of work.

Dr. Costanza suggests radically changing how we view economics by changing the way we value natural resources. He proposes that the world be managed via "ecological economics," in which natural resource use is given monetary value that is recovered and used for resource sustenance. One example of his strategy can be seen in a proposition he introduced in a letter to the *Baltimore Sun* (April 28, 2005) regarding the introduction of Asian oysters into the Chesapeake Bay. Proponents say the introduction of Asian oysters will save the Bay's oyster industry; opponents contend it is not worth the risk. Dr. Costanza suggests that risks would be mitigated if proponents had to post an assurance bond to cover worst-case damages from the introduction. The bond would be refunded if and when it could be demonstrated that potential environmental damages had been avoided. Should damages occur, the bond would be used to mitigate them and to compensate affected parties, ensuring that the full cost of the failure would be borne by proponents. Such a bond would force proponents to consider risks up front, before damages occur, and make it imperative for them to devise safe and environmentally protective procedures.

Charging for resource use/abuse motivates users to invest in eliminating problems, while the dollars collected are used to reinvest in preserving and restoring natural resources. Economic and financial interventions can provide powerful instruments for regulating the use of ecosystem services, and they have been effectively introduced in other countries. For example, Costa Rica uses collected fees to pay loggers *not* to log their forests so as to protect natural resources for the ecotourism industry. Similar concepts are included in the Kyoto Accord, which, according to Dr. Costanza, has been accepted by about half of the states in the U.S. although not the federal government.

For a broader perspective on these issues, please refer to the MA report, which can be downloaded at <http://millenniumassessment.org>. A summary report of this topic can be obtained by clicking "Synthesis Reports" and downloading Ecosystems & Human Well-Being Synthesis.

—Joan Cwi

CONSERVATION CONNECTION *(continued)*

Many of the birds killed are FWS "Birds of Management Concern" and include large numbers of such declining species as Golden-winged Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Cape May Warbler. AP News documented a tragic bird kill at a communication tower in Wisconsin during

the fall 2005 migration, undoubtedly a consequence of red solid-state lights and guy wires. The ABC hopes to gain the attention of new members of the FCC and its new Chairman to finally resolve this issue.

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS IN MARYLAND AND DC: NOMINATE A SITE!

BY DAVID CURSON AND MATT HAFNER

Over the past few months David Curson has visited bird clubs throughout the Maryland-DC area to introduce Audubon's Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program. He has spoken at 13 of the 15 MOS chapters as well as all 5 Audubon chapters in our region.

Important Bird Areas are sites that provide essential habitat to one or more species in any of three vulnerable categories of bird deemed "most in need of conservation":

- species at risk due to steeply declining populations, small population size, or some specific threat;
- species dependent on a single habitat type (habitat specialists); and
- congregatory species.

The goal of the program is to protect and actively manage IBAs specifically for these vulnerable birds, so that the network of IBAs across the state, and across all of North America, ensures that healthy populations persist.

It is enormously helpful to the process of identifying IBAs if sites are nominated by people familiar with the site and its birds. This provides the ornithological data necessary to determine whether the site is of IBA quality, along with information on land use and ownership, habitats, and potential threats, that help to begin planning appropriate conservation measures. **Please consider nominating an IBA.**

This is the year to nominate a site, because our goal is to have all IBAs in Maryland and DC identified by 2007. We recommend a teamwork approach, because nominators will likely have to compile bird data from a variety of sources to document a site sufficiently for review. Data sources may include (among others): Christmas Bird Counts, Midwinter Waterfowl Surveys and other surveys coordinated by the Department of Natural Resources, site-specific surveys, and unofficial bird counts taken during club field trips, Atlasing fieldwork, or just daily birding. **Some MOS chapters have already formed committees to compile IBA nominations**, and this is a great way to coordinate the effort.

Site nominations are reviewed by the IBA Technical Review Committee.* The Committee recently revised IBA criteria to include numerical site-level thresholds for each species at risk. This is a great improvement over the former percentage-based thresholds, and should make it much easier for nominators to judge whether their site is likely to qualify as an IBA.

As you scan down the list of species at risk and their site-level thresholds in the table, you will notice that inclusion is not based simply on rarity. Although it includes all the

birds listed as endangered, threatened, or in need of conservation by the Maryland DNR, it also lists many species that are fairly widespread in the state, such as American Black Duck and Prairie Warbler. These species are among those of conservation concern at the larger continental, or even global, scale, appearing on conservation listings such as Audubon's WatchList and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Birds of Conservation Concern. For such species, the center of their geographical range, where their populations tend to be most dense, is an important place to plan for their conservation. The site-level thresholds are lower for birds at greater risk, because the aim is to capture a larger proportion of these species' populations in the network of IBAs.

Other criteria for IBAs include:

- Sites that support a relatively complete bird species assemblage characteristic of rare or representative habitats, e.g., forest-interior-dwelling species, grassland birds.
- Sites with significant concentrations of birds.
- Sites where long-term research or monitoring continues to generate and publish high-quality, standardized data of value to conservation planning at the statewide scale.

A site need meet only one of the criteria listed to be selected as an IBA.**

A final note: This year is the final field season of the Maryland-DC Breeding Bird Atlas. If you do atlas fieldwork in an area that is being nominated as an IBA, get familiar with the species at risk and their thresholds listed in the table. Any counts or estimates of numbers of these species could be very helpful to the site review process. Thanks!

* Members of the IBA Technical Review Committee are Kyle Rambo (Chair), Patuxent River Naval Air Station; Wayne Bell, Washington College; David Curson, Audubon Maryland-DC; Lynn Davidson, MD Department of Natural Resources; Matt Hafner, Maryland Ornithological Society; Peter Marra, National Zoo, Smithsonian Institution; Greg Kearns, Patuxent River Park; Glenn Therres, MD Department of Natural Resources.

**Full details of the IBA criteria as well as exceptions, and also nomination forms, are available at Audubon's newly updated website at <http://mdmc.audubon.org> or by contacting Audubon MD-DC's Director of Bird Conservation, David Curson, at Audubon MD-DC, 2437 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21224, or 410-558-2473.

IBA SITE-LEVEL THRESHOLDS OF BIRD SPECIES AT RISK IN MARYLAND AND DC

Species	At-risk Category (in MD-DC)	Threshold Breeding Pairs	Threshold Nonbreeding individuals
American Bittern	Severely at risk	2	6
Northern Goshawk	Severely at risk	2	B
Black Rail	Severely at risk	2	6
Wilson's Plover	Severely at risk	2	6
Piping Plover	Severely at risk	2	6
Upland Sandpiper	Severely at risk	2	30
Red Knot	Severely at risk	N/A	40
Gull-billed Tern	Severely at risk	5	30
Royal Tern	Severely at risk	10	B
Black Skimmer	Severely at risk	5	30
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Severely at risk	2	B
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Severely at risk	3	9
Loggerhead Shrike	Severely at risk	3	9
Bewick's Wren (subsp. <i>altus</i>)	Severely at risk	3	9
Sedge Wren	Severely at risk	3	9
Swainson's Warbler	Severely at risk	3	9
Mourning Warbler	Severely at risk	3	B
Henslow's Sparrow	Severely at risk	5	9
Pied-billed Grebe	Highly at risk	5	B
Northern Harrier	Highly at risk	5	15
Peregrine Falcon	Highly at risk	3	30
Whimbrel	Highly at risk	N/A	60
Common Tern	Highly at risk	30	60
Least Tern	Highly at risk	20	60
Short-eared Owl	Highly at risk	3	15
Alder Flycatcher	Highly at risk	5	B
Golden-winged Warbler	Highly at risk	5	15
Nashville Warbler	Highly at risk	5	B
Blackburnian Warbler	Highly at risk	10	B
Cerulean Warbler	Highly at risk	10	15
Canada Warbler	Highly at risk	10	30
Nelson's Sharp-ailed Sparrow	Highly at risk	N/A	15
Saltmarsh Sharp-ailed Sparrow	Highly at risk	10	15
Swamp Sparrow (subsp. <i>nigrescens</i>)	Highly at risk	10	30
Dickcissel	Highly at risk	5	30
Rusty Blackbird	Highly at risk	N/A	60
Brown Pelican	At risk	40	B
Least Bittern	At risk	5	15

Species	At-risk Category (in MD-DC)	Threshold Breeding Pairs	Threshold Nonbreeding individuals
Little Blue Heron	At risk	40	30
Brant	At risk	N/A	120
American Black Duck	At risk	20	240
Bald Eagle	At risk	10	60
Northern Bobwhite	At risk	20	120
King Rail	At risk	5	B
Sora	At risk	5	B
Common Moorhen	At risk	5	15
American Golden Plover	At risk	N/A	60
American Oystercatcher	At risk	5	15
Purple Sandpiper	At risk	N/A	240
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	At risk	N/A	30
Short-billed Dowitcher	At risk	N/A	240
American Woodcock	At risk	10	45
Black-billed Cuckoo	At risk	10	30
Common Nighthawk	At risk	5	B
Chuck-will's-widow	At risk	10	30
Whip-poor-will	At risk	10	30
Red-headed Woodpecker	At risk	10	30
Willow Flycatcher	At risk	20	60
Bank Swallow	At risk	40	B
Brown-headed Nuthatch	At risk	30	120
Wood Thrush	At risk	160	480
Blue-winged Warbler	At risk	15	30
Prairie Warbler	At risk	30	60
Prothonotary Warbler	At risk	30	60
Worm-eating Warbler	At risk	20	60
Northern Waterthrush	At risk	10	B
Louisiana Waterthrush	At risk	20	60
Kentucky Warbler	At risk	30	60
Seaside Sparrow	At risk	40	120

¹B = At risk status applies to breeding populations only.

Tips from the Field

Thanks to Bob Augustine of Montgomery County for this field tip:

Carry along a hand or dish towel on your next trip out with your scope. Fold the towel lengthwise and wrap it around your tripod below the scope, folded side down, holding the ends together with a medium binder clip (available at office supply stores). The towel forms a nice pocket around the scope to hold any number of easily misplaced items such as glasses, lens covers, pens/pencils along with field guide and note pads, etc. As an added bonus the towel can be used to wipe your scope dry or clean your hands!

—Rick Sussman

MARYLAND'S IBAS

The first 14 IBAs in Maryland were publicly recognized in 2005. They are:

- Assateague Island, Worcester County
- Belt Woods, Prince George's County
- Blackwater-Fishing Bay Marshes, Dorchester County
- Central Chesapeake Islands, Somerset & Dorchester Counties
- Chapman Forest, Charles County
- Cranesville Swamp, Garrett County
- Deal Island, Somerset County
- Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Kent County
- Finzel Swamp, Garrett County
- Fort Smallwood, City of Baltimore
- Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore County
- Jug Bay, Anne Arundel & Prince George's Counties
- Maryland Coastal Bays, Worcester County
- Wolf Swamp, Garrett County

TWO IBAS OF GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE

Last fall Audubon Maryland-DC held ceremonies to dedicate two IBAs, both of global significance for bird conservation, on Maryland's Eastern Shore.



On October 1, Blackwater-Fishing Bay Marshes Important Bird Area was dedicated as part of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge's annual Open House. Blackwater-Fishing Bay Marshes is the largest contiguous block of coastal marsh in the Chesapeake region and one of the most important sites for bird conservation in Maryland. It hosts globally vulnerable Black Rails and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows, the largest Bald Eagle concentration on the East Coast outside Florida (up to 200 overwinter), and 30,000 wintering waterfowl, including 3,000 Black Ducks, an Audubon WatchList species.

From left to right, Dave Curson (Audubon Maryland-DC), Glenn Carowan (Blackwater NWR), Marty O'Conner (Friends of Blackwater NWR), Peter Jayne (Maryland DNR), Rick Leader (Audubon Maryland-DC). Photo: Gary Allport.



On December 10, it was the turn of Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. Eastern Neck NWR hosts exceptional numbers of waterfowl, including more than one percent of the global population of Tundra Swans. More than 2,000 Tundra Swans spend the early part of winter at the refuge, feeding on submerged vegetation and clams. Up to 35,000 waterfowl of other species also winter here, including 7,000 Canada Goose, 11,600 Scaup, 3,600 Canvasback, 7,000 Ruddy Duck, 7,600 Mallard and 1,000 Black Duck.

Congressman Wayne Gilchrest (left) presents Eastern Neck NWR manager, Marty Kaehny, with an IBA plaque. Photo: Hugh Simmons

BIRDERS WANT TO KNOW: HOW CAN IBAS HELP BIRDS?

There are three main ways that IBAs can help.

LAND PROTECTION. The state of Maryland purchases land for wildlife conservation through funding mechanisms such as Program Open Space. By prioritizing sites for bird conservation, IBAs represent a tool for conservation planning. Maryland's recently completed Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan (*Yellowthroat*, Jan-Feb) recognizes the value of the IBA Program by recommending collaboration between the two programs. Because IBA designation should help in protecting some of the highest priority sites, be sure to **consider nominating private lands as IBAs**, not just already protected areas.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT. Many IBAs are already publicly owned as National Wildlife Refuges, State Parks, State Forests, etc., but that does not necessarily mean they are being managed for the specific benefit of at-risk bird species. Many other land uses compete with wildlife conservation on public lands, and some of these are incompatible with protecting birds and their habitats. Even where public lands are managed for conservation, management may be oriented towards higher-profile species rather than the most vulnerable. For example, birds dependent on saltmarshes for nesting are an often overlooked group (by birders and land managers alike!), yet this is perhaps the highest priority bird community in Maryland from a

conservation perspective (think Black Rail and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow, both "red" WatchList species). The IBA Program is currently working with Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge to draft conservation objectives aimed specifically at saltmarsh-nesting birds. In addition to providing conservation management advice, another integral activity of the IBA Program is organizing **advocacy for IBAs through support groups**.

KNOWLEDGE OF BIRD POPULATIONS. We know a lot about population trends in Maryland and DC for some groups of birds, such as colonial waterbirds and waterfowl, thanks to well-organized monitoring schemes. But for most landbirds, which have widely-dispersed populations, our knowledge is much less complete. We need to monitor populations of our vulnerable birds so as to provide advice for habitat management at specific IBAs as well as for conservation planning across the state. For example, the State Forests in Allegany and Garrett Counties may well contain the majority of Maryland's Cerulean Warblers (another red WatchList species), but the DNR does not have the staff to monitor warbler populations or to consider their distribution within these forests when planning timber harvest schedules. One goal of the IBA Program is to monitor species at risk in each IBA. **We will do this by training volunteers from IBA support groups at bird monitoring workshops.**

ISO: IBWO

Among the 100-plus dedicated birders selected by Cornell University to spend a week or two in the chilly bottomland swamps of Arkansas searching for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker are several Marylanders. Harry Armistead, who reports regularly from his property in Dorchester Co, will be on a team exploring the Cache River NWR in late February and early March. Matt Hafner of Harford Co "had a great time" from January 2 to January 10. Bill Hubick of Anne Arundel County will be searching in the White River area from March 27 to April 9. Marshall Iliff was on the scene last winter. As for what they discover, participants sign an agreement not to reveal any woodpecker-related findings until Cornell is ready to release the information.

2005 SPECIES LISTS

Fran Saunders, signing off as keeper of the MD Species List (aka the Comp List), reports that Maryland ended 2005 with 345 species, representing 81.4% of all the birds on the state list, and added a possible three new species (Slaty-backed Gull, Northern Lapwing, and Barnacle Goose). "Not a bad year at all," she opines. Mike Burchett will be mind-ing the list in 2006.

In DC, listkeeper John Hubbell reported a 2005 total of 210 species (65.6%), plus two possible new species (Rufous Hummingbird and Cackling Goose).

For all the details, check Species Counts at the MOS web site, <http://www.mdbirds.org>.

The Birder's Vest

by Rick Sussman



Stick to a Steadier View

I've been a carrier for years. No, I'm not talking about Lyme disease, nor bird flu. I'm talking about hiking sticks. I long ago learned their benefits—how they ease weary legs on a long hike, the added stability they offer on icy or wet trails, the security of a “third leg” when crossing algae-covered rocks in a stream. One even recently saved me from sliding down the side of Stony Man Mountain while I was checking out a towhee's nest, when I jammed it in a cliffside rock to stop my freefall. And yet very few other birders ever bother to carry one.

Like many a time-honored convenience, hiking sticks have evolved into lightweight, compact, ergonomic devices in an endless variety of styles. One of my favorites (and I have many) is my Leki Wanderfreund, a fully adjustable aluminum three-section pole with a cane-style head, rubber tip covering a carbide steel tip for use on ice or rocks, and a removable snow basket. The two adjustable leg sections lock and unlock with a simple twist, making it easy to go from cane to walking staff. It collapses to fit into a suitcase, too. I take mine on casual strolls around Blue Mash and Meadowside Nature Center, where it comes in handy for pushing aside briars and poison ivy, clearing spider webs from trails, and navigating wet spots. It is always useful to support a trick knee and can, in a pinch, be used as a Finn Stick (see below). It can be purchased locally at REI or Hudson Trail Outfitters, 10-11 ounces, \$49.95–\$79.95, depending on model.

Big Pockets Birding Outfitters offers a folding model hiking staff that features three shock-corded sections for compact travel storage. It has a foam grip and a wedge-lock wrist loop as well as a camera mount beneath the walnut knob, which converts the staff to a monopod for a camera or light scope. Their ad says that it's also great for warding off fur seals on Antarctic trips! (10.5 ounces, \$67.00).

A monopod offers an alternative to a tripod for holding a camera or small spotting scope steady in the field. At best however, these can only support lighter weights and are not really designed as walking sticks.

A new product, carried by the American Birding Association as well as Time and Optics in Millersburg, Ohio, is the TrekPod made by Trek-Tech. It is advertised as a “unique combination of a lightweight, height-adjustable walking/hiking staff with a fully integrated tripod.” This is a hiking staff whose bottom portion spreads into three short tripod legs, held together with a Velcro strap. It has a cork handle and a wooden top that covers the threaded end, and an optional Mag Mount system for quick-release. Though this looks like a great idea in theory, at 30 ounces it seems heavy for most hikes (I like mine in the 10-12 ounce range) and looks like it suffers from the “Jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none” syndrome.

Most birders in this country have never heard of, let alone used, the Finn Stick. Usually homemade, this device is used to support binoculars for extended viewing, relieving the arms of fatigue. Its use dates back to the 1960s, when it was developed by experienced Finnish birder Karno Mikkola. Today nearly every serious Finnish birder owns and uses one.

Without going into too much detail, Finn Sticks are usually 16–28 inches long, made from light metal or wood, with a crosspiece at the top where the binoculars can rest. They can be made from an old tripod leg so as to be height-adjustable; the crosspiece should fit under the binoculars fairly snugly. It is because of

differences in binocular styles, interpupillary distances, and users' heights that they are mostly homemade, but they are not hard to make.

Recently I had been using my Leki hiking stick to support my binoculars, as the Leki fits very well under my 8x32 ELs. With one hand on the binoculars for focusing and the other at the low end of the hiking stick, I can get a much steadier view of a bird, especially a distant one (think waterfowl, shorebirds, hawkwatches, and seawatches).

Even more recently I decided to make my own Finn Stick. I fashioned the “stick” from a piece of white ash from an old hockey stick (the Finns would be proud!) and the crosspiece from an old block of American chestnut from a table support. I cut the crosspiece with a jigsaw to fit exactly under my binoculars, glued and screwed it to the top of the stick, and finished the whole thing with a few coats of lacquer. Then I lined the support platform with felt and applied a soft brown leather to the handle.

This device stabilizes the image, making possible long, lingering looks at birds with nearly the detail of a small scope. Cut to exactly 24 inches, the Finn Stick should fit easily into my suitcase when we go to Alaska next June, allowing me the option of leaving my scope and tripod home.

If you would like a copy of the article “The Finnstick” (Tools of the Trade, BIRDING, Volume XXV, Number 4, August 1993) by Annika Forsten and Walter S. Collins, send me a SASE (17917 Ashton Club Way, Ashton 20861) and I will mail you a copy.

Leki hiking sticks:

<http://www.leki.com/html/home.asp>.

TrekPod hiking sticks:

www.trek-tech.com.

Big Pockets Birding Outfitters:

www.bigpockets.com.

CHAN'S EXCELLENT RETIREMENT RECEPTION

Friday, December 9, was a special day at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center: Chan Robbins' family, coworkers, and many friends and well-wishers, some 200 strong, gathered at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Visitor Center to celebrate his 60th anniversary at PWRC and his upcoming retirement.

Luckily, the day's snow and ice storm ended early, and the roads dried off. (The maintenance crew had vowed to keep the roads clear for the reception, even if it meant volunteering in their off hours.) The weather did keep some people away, though. One couple planning to drive from Maine was stymied by forecasts of heavy snow; others had their flights cancelled. But all four of Chan and Eleanor's children were there, including son George (with wife and daughter), who surprised Chan by flying in from New Hampshire.

The lobby of the Visitor Center was given over to a buffet. Decorating the cake was a picture of the oldest known Laysan Albatross, which Chan first banded in 1956 and then recaptured in 2002, as well as a picture of Chan and Eleanor relaxing at an MOS convention in Ocean City. In the auditorium, visitors could watch a video put together by Maryland Public Television, which incorporated several *Outdoors Maryland* shows featuring Chan. In an adjoining room, a PowerPoint program ran through highlights of his work over the years. (You can view the PowerPoint program at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/>.) Collages and banners with photos of work and family lined the corridor.

MOS members were plentiful at the reception, from Garrett County to Harford County to the Eastern Shore. Also present were members of the choir that Chan has sung with for years, plus co-workers, retired co-workers, and volunteers who helped on many of Chan's projects, including his work in the tropics. His first field assistant in the 1950s drove from Virginia to attend.

It was a relaxed and magical evening, and in a Christmas letter to his friends Chan wrote, "Many thanks for making December 9 one of the most memorable days of my life."

Many at Patuxent—Refuge Staff, Friends of Patuxent, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Patuxent Volunteers, and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Staff—pitched in to make this possible. Especially involved were Chan's assistant, Barbara Dowell, along with Jay Sheppard, Barbara Keywood, Kinard Boone, and Lois Loges.

We are also very grateful to MOS for their contribution to this event. It was the first contribution we received, and it really kept us going as we planned this affair.

Chan officially retired on December 30. However, we are happy to claim him as our most famous volunteer; he continues to come in to the office nearly every day.

We all wish him well in his retirement.

—Jane Fallon

Echo Wings Nature Camps

Echo Wings is a six-day residential summer camp for students entering 5th through 9th grades. Directed by Anne Arundel's Larry Zoller, Echo Wings camp (at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center) is designed for kids who are interested in exploring nature and wildlife, with an emphasis on birdwatching: early morning bird walks, nature canoe trips, late-night owl prowls. The two 2006 sessions will run from July 1 to 6 and July 8 to 13. For more information, check www.arlingtonecho.org or contact Larry at 410-437-2400.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD (AND LAB): YOUR RESEARCH AWARD DOLLARS AT WORK!

The MOS Research Committee recently received written reports of completed work from two MOS Research Award recipients. Some of you may have spoken to one of these enthusiastic students (Spring Ligi) at the last Research Poster Session in Solomons. Below are summaries of work done with help from MOS. Both students are submitting papers from their work for publication in scientific journals. We can be proud of the contribution that MOS makes to further the scientific knowledge of birds in Maryland, and to support the development of tomorrow's scientists.

—Gwen Brewer

"Contrasting Breeding Strategies of Two Species of Orioles: First Documentation of Double-brooding in Orchard Orioles," *Spring Ligi, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.*

Orchard Orioles (*Icterus spurius*) and Baltimore Orioles (*I. galbula*) were captured and banded at three study sites in Maryland in 2004 and 2005 in order to document breeding behavior. Although no cases of double brooding were observed among 26 Baltimore Oriole pairs, 8 of the 24 Orchard Oriole breeding pairs (33%) were documented as raising a second brood. According to our data, 7 of the 16 Orchard Oriole pairs (44%) that successfully raised a first brood to fledging also successfully raised a second brood in the same season. This study provides the first documentation of double-brooding in the temperate-breeding Orchard Oriole.

In addition to the number of broods, the onset of incubation was compared between Orchard and Baltimore orioles. The average onset of incubation for first broods was almost identical in both species: May 23 in Baltimore Orioles and May 22 in Orchard Orioles. The average onset of incubation for Orchard Oriole second broods was June 24. Female Orchard Orioles typically initiated building of the second nest within five days of the first brood fledging.

There are several possible explanations for why double-brooding was observed in Orchard Orioles but not Baltimore Orioles. Preliminary data comparing parental care patterns of both species suggest that female Baltimore Orioles may provide more care to first brood fledglings than do female Orchard Orioles. Also, Baltimore Orioles molt on their breeding grounds. Thus, Baltimore Orioles (especially females) may not have enough time or energy to care for first-brood fledglings and raise a second brood to independence before molting and migrating. Orchard Orioles, in contrast, migrate first and then molt on or near their wintering grounds; this could provide them with an extra five to six weeks towards the end of the breeding season to potentially double-brood.

"Response to Song Types with Different Performance Levels in Red-winged Blackbirds," *Emily R. A. Cramer, St. Mary's College of Maryland.*

Physical constraints on animal signals can help keep those signals honest and thus can have important consequences for communication. For bird songs that include a trill, performance is constrained by a trade-off between the rate at which notes are repeated in the trill and the sound frequency range covered, such that a trill cannot exceed a certain frequency range for a given note repetition rate. Producing trills that are closer to this performance limit is presumably more challenging for birds than producing trills that are farther from it. Male Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) have repertoires of two to eight song types containing trills that can span a range of performance levels.

In 2003 and 2004 in southern Maryland, the song repertoires of 25 male Red-winged Blackbirds were recorded, and the song types of each male were measured and classified as either high or low performance level relative to the population limit. On average, males sang five different song types with a range of performance level. High and low performance songs were then played back during experiments to look at male responses. In this study, males responded significantly more strongly to songs containing low performance trills. These results indicate that male Red-winged Blackbirds discriminate between song types with different performance levels, suggesting that vocal proficiency plays a role in communication between males and perhaps territorial defense.

Searching for Research Proposals

Twice each year MOS awards grants to fund ornithological research conducted in Maryland. The next deadline for research proposals is June 1.

For information, contact Research Committee Chair, Gwen Brewer, glbrewer@comcast.net.

MOS YOUTH BIRDING

This year we hope to initiate a new component of MOS, a focus on youth groups, elementary through high school age. The last several years have seen an increased interest in youth birding in some areas in the state. This past year Maryland youth have been involved in the World Series of Birding, Christmas Bird Counts, and the MD/DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project. What is needed is a way for these interested youth to fit under the MOS umbrella.

Currently, interested youth would have to join a chapter and basically tag along with the adults. While there are some young people who do this or would do this, my 35 years of teaching experience tells me that the vast majority would prefer a youth component, where they could participate in activities with other young people.

What we are proposing is a youth group membership. Each group would belong to a youth version of MOS (YMOS) and would be affiliated with a designated chapter. Each group would be assigned an adult mentor from that chapter. The group would pay annual membership fees and, in return, would receive numerous benefits, including the opportunity to interact with other groups, both in person and on line.

We are currently developing a YMOS website, <http://www.qacps.k12.md.us/bird/mos/youth.htm>. This site will facilitate the sharing of ideas, data, and resources among groups. The site will include a calendar of events, ideas/activities for teachers, and links to good birding sites for young birders.

In addition to getting YMOS off the ground this year, we are looking at involving youth through several other approaches, including sponsoring a youth birding competition this spring (see separate article), getting young people involved in the MOS Conference in June, and providing awards for bird-related projects at regional science fairs.

We hope to develop a brochure as plans evolve; this can be distributed to all chapters and through other environmental educational circles. Anyone interested in getting involved with our developing plans or who has a youth group that would like to get involved should contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@qacps.k12.md.us.

—George Radcliffe

Youth Birding Competition Saturday, April 29, 2006 Wye Island NRMA

The first annual MOS Youth Birding Competition will take place on Saturday, April 29, at the Wye Island Natural Resources Management Area on the Eastern Shore. Designed in the spirit of the World Series of Birding, the event is really more educational than competitive. The competition provides the incentive and an opportunity for social interaction and educational sharing for youth with similar interests. The competition is open to any team with a minimum of three members, high school age or below, and an adult leader. Teams will identify as many bird species as they can during the competition hours. In addition to the competition, the event will include some instruction, sharing, and social activities. The competition will open at 4 AM on Saturday, but teams can begin anytime on Saturday morning. Overnight camping facilities will be available for any interested groups. On Friday, there will be opportunities for teams to receive an orientation, tour the island, and scout for promising habitats. Interested teams should contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@qacps.k12.md.us.

Maryland Tropicbirds

Two—not one, but two—young Maryland birders have been named to the American Birding Association's four-person Tropicbirds youth team. Jim Wilson, Jr., from Queen Anne's Co and Jordan Rutter from Montgomery Co will compete in the Great Texas Birding Classic the last week in April. And their coaches? Michael O'Brien and his wife, Louise Zemaitis. Michael and Louise may live in Cape May, NJ, but Michael developed his birding skills growing up in Montgomery Co.

Jim and Jordan will use the Texas competition to raise money for ABA youth programs. You can support their efforts by pledging, either a fixed amount or an amount per species, at wlsngant@intercom.net.

MINUTES OF THE MOS BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 10, 2005

President: Janet Millenson
Vice-President: *absent*
Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: Paul Zucker

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
EFM: Gayle Bach-Watson
Important Bird Areas: Matt Hafner
Investments: Martha Waugh
Membership: Linda Keenan
Merchandise/Pin Contest/Awards:
 John Malcolm
Sanctuary: Brent Byers
Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda

Allegany: *not represented*
Anne Arundel: Linda Baker,
 Tom Bradford
Baltimore: Brent Byers,
 Helene Gardel
Caroline: *not represented*
Carroll: Maureen Harvey
Cecil: *not represented*
Frederick: Gayle Bach-Watson,
 Helen Horrocks, Michael Welch
Harford: Matt Hafner
Howard: Mary-Jo Betts,
 Jane Coskren, Tom Strikwerda,
 Kate Tufts, Martha Waugh
Kent: Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin
Montgomery: Mike Bowen,
 Hugh Mahanes, Judy McCartney,
 John Malcolm, Helen Patton,
 Rick Sussman
Patuxent: Fred Fallon, Jane Fallon,
 Linda Keenan, Tom Loomis,
 Fred Shaffer
Talbot: *not represented*
Tri-County: *not represented*
Washington: *not represented*

President Janet Millenson called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and thanked the Patuxent Chapter for hosting the meeting at the College Park Airport Annex.

Minutes of the previous meeting were corrected under the Past Action Item referring to IBA, to read that Matt Hafner has taken that job. The minutes were approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge's quarterly Treasurer's Report was distributed to the board. A check was received from the Wilson Ornithological Conference for \$400.

President's Remarks: Both membership cards and MOS business cards are available for the chapters. George Radcliffe was unable to attend the board meeting due to a death in his family but has some wonderful plans for the MOS Youth Programs; we will hear more about this in the future. Membership outreach has been discussed by Janet and membership chair Linda Keenan.

Since Al Haury moved to Maine, the Nominating Committee needs a new chair. Helen Patton agreed to assume this position, leaving a vacancy on the committee. Barbara Gaffney agreed to fill that vacancy. Janet Millenson asked for the board's approval of the new Nominating Committee, consisting of Helen Patton as chair, Mary-Jo Betts, Mike Bowen, Barbara Gaffney, and Peter Mann. The board voted to approve the proposed Nominating Committee members.

Janet announced that Kate Tufts will be working with Publicity Committee chair Cecily Nabors to help and advise MOS people on writing publicity material. Kate is looking for people around the state willing to write publicity articles for MOS.

CHAPTER REPORTS

Janet Millenson is starting a new practice of having reports by any chapter presidents wishing to update or share information with the board.

- **Anne Arundel:** Linda Baker reports that they have moved their meeting place to Arlington Echo.
- **Kent:** Since they are no longer able to meet at the library, Nancy

Martin said that their new meeting place is the retirement community of Heron Point. As a result, they have gained some older new members. Walter Ellison will have a field trip for them around Heron Point.

- **Patuxent:** Fred Shaffer said that the Patuxent chapter has become more active in the last few years. They are offering more field trips and now have a newsletter. Their membership is up 50 percent.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Atlas: Jane Coskren said extensive blockbusting has been on going during safe dates. Miniroutes are going to be extended one year beyond the original five years of atlas data collection. Walter Ellison announced that the official deadline is October 1 for all data entry, and October 20 for review of the data. Probably fewer than 50 blocks now lack data. Outdoor Maryland filmed atlas with both Chan Robbins and Walter; this should appear on TV within the year.

Conference: Janet Shields reported that the 2007 conference would be held July 27-29 at Salisbury University. The committee will begin working in earnest on 2006 in October. Field trips are already being reviewed for the conference area and suggestions solicited from local members.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey said that the Roth Rock Wind Power Project is still holding hearings, which are being attended by MOS members. The ABC's (American Bird Conservancy) Cats Indoors Campaign has entered its ninth year. Also, MOS has signed onto ABC's letter regarding American birds sold in the European pet trade. Maureen also talked about the proposal to develop protected acres at Fair Hill. Consult the next issue of Yellowthroat for more details on these subjects.

EFM: Gayle Bach-Watson circulated a copy of her EFM letter requesting

help increasing the number of workplaces that will allow EFM campaigns. She asked that chapter presidents distribute the letter to their members

Important Bird Areas: Matt Hafner explained that they are trying to give people a better idea of the criteria used to determine important bird areas. David Curson is speaking to all MOS chapters to help achieve this. Matt said that they need suggestions for these areas from MOS members. Their goal is to have identified all IBA areas in Maryland by 2007.

Investment: Martha Waugh distributed her written report. The total portfolio value is \$1,429,739 as of August 31.

Membership: Linda Keenan is looking for ways to increase new members and maintain our current members. New members will be given "Yellowbooks," a \$10 coupon for use towards conference registration, and a checklist of MD birds. The MOS brochure now has membership information for each chapter. Linda and Janet Millenson have agreed that a youth group may join as a group but will get sent only one set of publications. Linda is also putting together a Best Practices list for chapters, which will give suggestions to encourage new members and maintain existing members. Ideas from the chapters on Best Practices to encourage new members would be welcome.

Merchandise/Pin Contest/Awards:

According to John Malcolm, all of the MOS merchandise was sold at the MOS conference in May with the exception of a few magnets and decals. Conference T-shirts sold out. Updated checklists of MD birds are now available; John distributed copies to the chapters present at the meeting. John is looking for entries to the MOS Conference Pin Contest; he urges chapter presidents to encourage their members to enter. Contest deadline is January 16, 2006. Anyone who would like to enter but has questions should

contact John at smudgie@comcast.net or 301-977-5788. John is willing and eager to make awards for the individual chapters; contact him for help or suggestions. Please be sure to give him adequate advance notice so that he will not have a problem meeting your deadline.

Sanctuaries: Brent Byers announced that there would be a work party at Irish Grove from September 29 through the first week in October. Volunteers are welcome throughout that period.

Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda asked that chapters remind their members to recommend people for scholarships. He would particularly like to target teachers and nature center workers. Tom also needs access to private schools in order to increase the number of teachers informed of scholarships. He requests that chapters send him information on any private schools in their area.

OLD BUSINESS

Potential Piscataway Sanctuary: Janet Millenson and Brent Byers Sanctuary chair, met with Mid-Atlantic. Trash and debris need to be removed by the developer. Mid-Atlantic will provide a fence between the sanctuary area and the new homes development but are not willing to provide money for future upkeep. Janet Millenson suggested that money could possibly be raised by selling honorary plots of the sanctuary to people.

NEW BUSINESS

Birding access to Mason-Dixon property no longer available: This issue was discussed by the board. Members of the Frederick chapter talked with the owner and will try to maintain contact with him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Chapter presidents—forward ideas to Linda Keenan on Best Practices to encourage or welcome new members used by your chapter.
- Chapter treasurers—contact Linda Keenan with updated chapter dues for the membership brochure
- Chapter presidents—encourage members to enter conference pin contest. Deadline is 1/16/06.
- Chapter presidents—circulate scholarship information. Contact information is needed for private schools in each chapter area
- Chapter presidents—ask for names of local private schools and contact information to be forwarded to Tom Strikwerda so that he may increase the number of teachers contacted about scholarships.
- Chapter presidents—Kate Tufts, Ktufts@verizon.net, is looking for people around the state willing to write publicity articles for MOS.

President Janet Millenson adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Janet Shields,
Secretary

M. Gary Smyle 1942-2006

M. Gary Smyle, Frederick County birder and photographer, died of pulmonary fibrosis complicated by pneumonia on January 13, 2006. He leaves his wife Betty, son James, daughter Lisa, four grandchildren, and a host of friends.

A 1965 graduate of Virginia Tech, Gary retired from Bell Atlantic after 34 years with the company. A man of many interests, he was active in Telephone Pioneers, Kiwanis, and the Frederick Historical Society, holding offices in all at one time or another.

He joined MOS in 1997 and then plunged headfirst into birding. He eventually tried to photograph each species he saw. He visited Texas, Arizona, Panama, Florida, and the whole of Maryland to fulfill his passion for birds. His last great bird was Maryland's first Townsend's Warbler.

The Frederick Chapter of MOS was privileged to have him as a member, but for too short a time. He led field trips, both scheduled and impromptu, participated in numerous bird counts, atlased many blocks, and gave several photo talks to the group. His photos were recently published in the newsletter of the American Bird Conservancy and can be found on the MOS web site, www.mdbirds.org. His infectious enthusiasm and boundless energy amazed all who knew him. Despite having an incurable lung condition, he remained positive and upbeat to the end. All of his friends will miss him dearly.



—Helen Horrocks, Mike Welch, Kathy Calvert

Journey with Nature

Harford member Debbie Stewart, working with fellow club member Colleen Webster, will be offering a nature-oriented weekend retreat April 21-23 for breast cancer survivors. Debbie herself is a long-term breast cancer survivor as well as a nurse at Johns Hopkins. The goal is to offer women who have recently completed breast cancer treatment an opportunity to connect with nature by having them experience the beauty of the natural world through observation and interactive experiences. This weekend program—in and around the trails and parks of Havre de Grace and Harford County, and supported in part by the Harford Bird Club—will combine physical activity, survivorship support, and education. Activities will include birdwatching, nature observation, meditation, and journal-keeping.

For information, e-mail Debbie at dstewa24@jhmi.edu.

Honoring Helen Ford

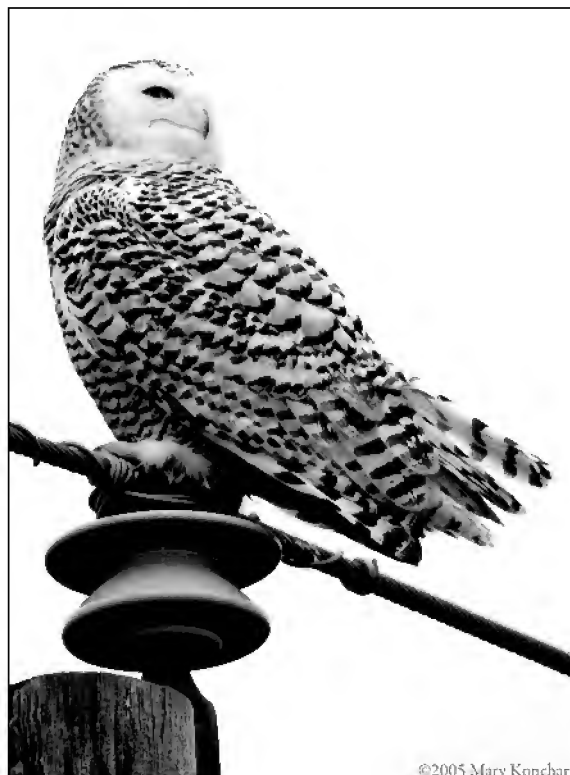
As a tribute to Helen Ford, who served MOS for many years at both the state and chapter levels, the State Board voted in December to name an existing but unnamed MOS scholarship the Helen Ford Memorial Scholarship.



Birds of Note

—by Les Roslund

- In mid-December, birders at three locations were treated to views of SNOWY OWLS. A young female showed up along Elliott Island Road in Dorchester County on Dec 17 and stayed in the region for several days, much to the joy of birders and photographers. Also on Dec 17, a different SNOWY OWL—more lightly barred—was observed on Hart-Miller Island. The next day a third SNOWY OWL was discovered on private property near Centreville in Queen Anne's County during a Christmas Count.
- During the St. Michaels Christmas Count on Dec 18 in Talbot County, a very late NASHVILLE WARBLER was found in a hedgerow of the Tilghman Community Park.
- WHITE PELICANS provided a special present on Christmas Day for birders visiting Blackwater NWR in Dorchester County. These birds have stayed around for several months, with as many as four being seen resting on mud bars at various sites along the wildlife drive.
- A young male HARLEQUIN DUCK was spotted Jan 2 amongst the boats at the Cambridge Marina in Dorchester County. This bird also stayed around, and it seemed to be enjoying the companionship of several other divers—four or more female LONG-TAILED DUCKS, a female RUDDY, and several LESSER SCAUP.
- Far and away the most thrilling visitor of the period was a delicate and beautiful TOWNSEND'S WARBLER, found near the Noland's Ferry parking lot at the C&O Canal in Frederick County during a Jan 2 Christmas Count. This was the first-ever Maryland sighting of a TOWNSEND'S WARBLER, and the identification call was made by Montgomery Bird Club member Claire Wolfe, a native Californian, who was with Montgomery County birders Lydia Schindler and Jeff Gould at the time. More than 100 birders of the region descended upon the Noland's Ferry site during the next four days, and many were rewarded with great views. Near 5 p.m. on Jan 6, the little bird was seen heading down river, and no further sightings were reported.

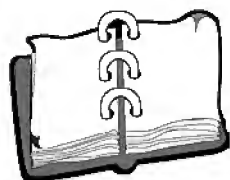


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Photo of Snowy Owl courtesy of Mary Konchar.



Townsend's Warbler courtesy of Mark L. Hoffman.



MOS Calendar

March-April 2006

Wednesday, March 1

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Mike Braun* will present "Evolving Species and Species Concepts (or Why the AOU Just Won't Leave Your Life List Alone)." 7:30 PM at the Senior Center, Stoner Ave, Westminster. For info, contact Tammy Schwaab, 410-857-4913.

Thursday, March 2

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Dave Brinker* will discuss "Maryland's Colonial Nesting Waterbirds: Who's Up and Who's Down." 7 PM. Community Rm, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick. Contact Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098, for more info.

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** Richard E. Heise, Jr. Annual Wildlife Lecture. "The Rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker" by *Ron Rohrbach*. 8 PM. Quiet Waters Park, 600 Quiet Waters Park Rd, Annapolis. Host: Paul Speyser, 410-266-5669.

Friday, March 3

MEETING. **Harford.** "Atlantic Seaduck Project—Chesapeake Bay to Hudson Bay" by *Dr. Matthew C. Perry*, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Dinner at 6:15 PM followed by meeting and presentation at 7 PM. Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 and MD 136. Info and dinner reservations: Rick Cheicante, 410-803-2712.

Saturday, March 4

MOS BOARD MEETING. 10 AM. Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville, Anne Arundel County. Info: Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, 301-415-7109 or janetbill@prodigy.net.

Baltimore. Horsehead Wetlands Center/Terrapin Nature Park. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R or alternatively 8:30 AM at Horsehead. Varied habitats for passerines and

waterfowl. Entrance fee waived for card-carrying MOS and BBC members. Leader: Kevin Graff, ocean_city2001@yahoo.com. Coordinator: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Cecil. Horsehead Wetlands Center. Meet 7 AM at Big Elk Mall (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Frederick. Waterfowl Wander. Waterfowl, late winter birds, and early spring migrants. Meet 7:30 AM at Baker Park. Call Mike Welch, 301-874-5828, for info.

Sunday, March 5

Harford. Loch Raven. Join veteran leaders Dave Larkin and Don Soubie to explore one of Baltimore's most scenic waterscapes. Just 6 miles north of downtown Towson, this reservoir and its surrounding forest are a magnet for pine-loving songbirds and waterfowl. Ring-necked Duck, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Fox Sparrow are likely. Meet 7:30 AM at the MD 152/MD 147 P&R. Info: Dave Larkin, 410-569-8319.

Baltimore. Loch Raven. Waterfowl and landbirds. Possible Bald Eagles and Eastern Bluebirds. Scopes useful. Two-mile level walk. Beginning birders welcome. Meet 8 AM at Stone Hill Rd. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s2bcpl.net.

Carroll. Blackwater NWR. All-day trip during the start of the waterfowl migration. Bring a lunch. Meet 7:30 AM at the I-70/Rte 32 P&R. Leader: Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117.

H Indicates Field Trip

Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Meet 8 AM at West End parking lot. Leaders: TBA. Facilities available. Info: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

Talbot. Wye Island. Waterfowl, winter species, and early migrants. No breakfast. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651 or birder231@hotmail.com.

Tuesday, March 7

MEETING. **Baltimore.** "The Longest Pelagic—24 Days in the Southern Hemisphere" by *Gail Mackiernan*. 7:30 PM, Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Info: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, March 8

Harford. Timberdoodle Watch. The first of two early evening trips for American Woodcock. Dress warmly and meet co-leaders John Gallo and Colleen Webster 6 PM at the corner of the Aberdeen Wal-Mart parking lot adjacent to Rte 7. Info: John Gallo, 410-459-0548.

Thursday, March 9

MEETING. **Talbot.** 7:30 PM. *Edwin B. James* will present "Birds of New Zealand: A Walk Through the North Island." If a place could truly be described as the land of birds, New Zealand is it. Meeting upstairs at the Easton Welcome Center, South Harrison St, Easton.

MEETING. **Howard.** "Special Birds and the Breeding Bird Atlas in Howard County," by *Jo Solem and Bonnie Ott*. The final year of the MD Breeding Bird Atlas is under way. See

how Howard Co's results so far compare with previous efforts, and find out what special species have been confirmed. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-998-5336.

Saturday, March 11

H Tri-County. Prime Hook NWR and Henlopen SP, DE. Waterfowl and early migrants. Meet 7:30 AM at Asbury United Methodist Church (east parking lot adjacent to Wesley Dr), Salisbury. Leader: TBA.

H Frederick. Piney Run. Late winter waterfowl and maybe really early spring migrants. Meet 7:30 AM at Baker Park. For info contact Linda Keller, 301-834-7312.

H Howard. Howard Waterfowl Search. Half day. Plan to visit Columbia area lakes and other Howard Co waters, including Triadelphia, to search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons, and other waterfowl. Easy walking involved. Plan to car-pool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Meet 8 AM at Broken Land Pkwy lot at Lake Elkhorn. Facilities available at certain locations. Leader: Stan Arnold, 410-768-0155.

H Anne Arundel. Wye Island NRMA. Full day. 2,800-acre site managed by DNR for agriculture, waterfowl, and other wildlife. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and landbirds. Meet 7:30 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Bring a lunch. Leader: Bobbi Reichwein, 410-451-2671.

H Cecil. Cecil Waterfowl. Meet 8 AM at North East Plaza. Leader: Chris Starling, beltedkingfisherchris@hotmail.com.

H Washington. Black Hill RP. Meet 9 AM at the Rte 66 P&R. Leader: Shirley Ford, 301-241-3020.

H Kent. Leader's Choice. Late winter birding destination to be determined by the leaders and the weather. Meet 7 AM at the "Dollar General" parking

lot (the old A & P, off Philosopher's Terrace), Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205 or pmann@epl-inc.com.

H Montgomery. Patuxent River SP, Jug Bay. Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Possible Rusty Blackbirds, migrating Wilson's Snipe, and Osprey. Meet 8 AM at park hdqtrs. Reservations required. Contact leader John Bjerke, 301-963-8525, to reserve a spot and get directions.

Sunday, March 12

H Baltimore. Middle Creek WMA. All day-trip (bring lunch) to this major gathering place north of Lancaster, PA for Snow Geese and other waterfowl. There is also an excellent display of mounted birds at the Visitor Center. Note: Trip may go elsewhere if Middle Creek is frozen over. Meet 8 AM at Timonium P&R on Greenspring Dr/Deereco Rd off Timonium Rd just east of I-83. Leader: Steve Sanford, 410-922-5103 or scartan@verizon.net.

H Talbot. Centaur Farm, Tunis Mills. Waterfowl and early migrants. Breakfast host: Sue Ormsby. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002 or wbell2@washcoll.edu.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Meet 8 AM at West End parking lot. Leaders: TBA. Facilities available. Info: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

Tuesday, March 14

MEETING. **Allegany.** *Walter Ellison* will analyze the "State of the Atlas." Preliminary results are showing some important trends and there are some interesting comparisons to make with the first atlas project. 7 PM at Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland (across

the street from the Board of Ed. Bldg). Contact: J.B. Churchill, 301-697-1223 or jchurchi@atlanticbb.net for info.

MEETING. **Kent.** *Peter Mann* will present "Birds of Lapland." 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

Wednesday, March 15

H Harford. Timberdoodle Watch. The second early evening trip for American Woodcock. Dress warmly and meet co-leaders John Gallo and Colleen Webster 6 PM at the corner of the Aberdeen Wal-Mart parking lot adjacent to Rte 7. Info: John Gallo, 410-459-0548.

H Montgomery. Informal Evening Walk until Dusk. First of three late afternoon trips in and around western Montgomery Co. After checking out the river, we will proceed to Hughes Hollow. Highlights here will include waterfowl flying in to roost (a great ID challenge at twilight) and, possibly, displaying American Woodcock. Bring a scope and flashlight, and wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Meet 5 PM on the bridge at Riley's Lock. Leader: Jim Green, 301-208-2393 or jgreen@smokeyglenfarm.com.

Thursday, March 16

MEETING. **Caroline.** "Plovers and Poets" presented by *Rachelle Daigneault*. 7:30 PM at Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Friday, March 17

ANNUAL SOCIAL. **Montgomery.** 6:30 PM at ANS headquarters/Woodend, Chevy Chase.

H Baltimore. Poplar Island. When this environmental restoration project (similar to Hart-Miller) is completed, it will provide approximately 570 acres of wetland and 570 acres of upland habitat. It is reached by a 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman Island. Meet 6:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R or meet 9 AM at Tilghman

MOS Calendar (continued from page 19)

Island. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Bring snacks if desired. Lunch will be at a local restaurant. Reservations required. Leader: Chrissy Albanese. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

Saturday, March 18

H Cecil. Blackwater NWR and Ocean City. Full day. Meet 6 AM at Big Elk Mall (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Montgomery. Lingerer Waterfowl and Sparrows. Half day. Meet at Riley's Lock at 7 AM, then follow leader to a sequence of interesting places. Reservations not required. Leader: Dave Powell, 301-540-8776.

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Ft. McHenry. A continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Meet 8 AM at the Visitor Center. Cancelled in bad weather (high winds, fog, rain, snow). Directions: from I-695 southwest of the city, take exit 11, I-95, north towards the city. Get off at exit 55, Hanover St. Turn east (right) on McComas St, left (north) on Key Hwy. First left at Lawrence St and left onto Fort Ave. Continue through gateway into the park. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Sunday, March 19

H Harford. Harford Waterfowl Tour. Marvel at thousands of Lesser Scaup and search for species that are tough to find locally, such as Surf Scoter, Redhead, Long-tailed Duck, and Northern Shoveler. Beginners and experienced birders alike will enjoy this morning trip to the Upper Bay and Havre de Grace. Scopes are helpful. Dress warmly and be sure to bring photo ID. Meet 6 AM in back lot of the Rte 40 McDonald's in Edgewood. Leader: Dave Webb, 410-939-3537.

H Talbot. Bennett Point. Waterfowl, sparrows, and early migrants. No breakfast. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center,

Easton or 7:25 AM at LL Bean, Prime Outlets, Queenstown. Leader: Susanna Scallion, 410-770-4585.

H Frederick. Hughes Hollow. Full day. Meet 6:30 AM at Baker Park. We will carpool to Hughes Hollow. Bird Hughes Hollow and surrounding areas until early afternoon. For those who want to continue, we will lunch in Poolesville and then head back to adjacent areas to continue birding. At dusk we will look for ducks that fly in after sunset to roost. Bring snacks, beverages, wet weather footwear, and scope. Leader: Jim Green, 301-208-2393 or jgreen@smokeyglenfarm.com.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Meet 8 AM at West End parking lot. Leaders: TBA. Facilities available. Info: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

H Anne Arundel. Wooten's Landing. Pre-dawn trip to witness the spectacular display flights of the American Woodcock. Depart 4:30 AM from the Parole P&R. After birding, for those who wish, we will be going to breakfast at a location TBD. Leader: Kathie Lambert, 410-867-4056.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding. No designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Tuesday, March 21

H Montgomery. Informal Evening Walk until Dusk. Second of three late afternoon trips in and around western Montgomery Co. See March 15 listing for trip details.

Wednesday, March 22

H Montgomery. Informal Evening Walk until Dusk. Last of three late afternoon trips in and around western Montgomery Co. See March 15 listing for trip details.

Saturday, March 25

H Cecil. Woodlawn Nature Preserve. Bluebird box-building and nature walk. Meet 7 AM at Big Elk Mall (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leaders: Jerry Newman, Ken Drier, and Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

H Kent. Owl Prowl. This field trip will hopefully bring us face to face with owls, following an introduction to local species and their calls. Meet 6 PM at the Eastern Neck NWR Lodge. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205 or pmann@epl-inc.com.

H Frederick. Fox Haven. Lingerers, sparrows, and early migrants. Meet 8 AM at Jefferson P&R on Rte 340 and Lander Rd. Call Linda Keller, 301-834-6977, for info.

Saturday-Sunday, March 25-26

H Baltimore. Ocean City Inlet SeaWatch. Meet 7:30 AM at the inlet parking lot (south end of Ocean City) for full day watch for gannets and other seabirds headed north. Expect to see Brants, scoters, a variety of gulls, and (with a little luck) pelagic birds close to shore. (A Red Phalarope was seen at SeaWatch in March of 2004.) Spend Fri night for early start on Sat. Bring lawn chair, scope, and warm drinks. Leader will provide snacks. Bring lunch or buy nearby. Dinner/tally Sat evening at local restaurant. Optional stay-over Sat night for birding the inlet Sun AM, then birding stops on way home. Contact leader for motel reservations, meeting place, and add'l info. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456, ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

Sunday, March 26

H Talbot. Mill Creek Sanctuary. Early migrants, Rusty Blackbird, owls, and woodpeckers. Breakfast host: Terry and Patty Allen. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Meet 8 AM at West End parking lot. Leaders: TBA. Facilities available. Info: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding. No designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Monday, March 27

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING. **Tri-County.** 6 PM at Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Salisbury. Speaker: *Jeff Gordon*, Associate Director, Abbot's Mill Nature Center.

Tuesday, March 28

MEETING. **Washington.** *Gail Mackiernan* will present "The Longest Pelagic." Mt. Aetna Nature Center, 7:30 PM. Call 301-797-8454 for details.

Wednesday, March 29

H Baltimore. Loudon Park Cemetery. Meet 9:30 AM at cemetery. From I-695, take exit 13, Rte 144/Frederick Rd east, towards the city (away from Catonsville). Go about 2.5 miles. Just past Mount St. Joseph HS, turn right into the cemetery's main entrance. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

Thursday, March 30

H Anne Arundel. Location in Anne Arundel Co TBD. Contact leader, Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336 for add'l info.

Saturday, April 1

H Cecil. Mt. Harmon Plantation and Grove Neck Sanctuary. Meet 8 AM at Big Elk Mall (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Full day. Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

H Harford. Susquehanna Scoping. Unbeatable river access at an ideal time of the year! Join Matt Hafner to scope the Susquehanna in hopes of spotting one of the Little or Black-headed Gulls that regularly co-mingle amongst the large flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls. Loons, grebes, waterfowl, raptors, and other gulls are sure to add highlights. Scopes helpful but not required. Meet at the MD 155/I-95 P&R at 7 AM. Contact Matt Hafner, 410-971-3203, for more info.

H Anne Arundel. Smithsonian Research Center. Half day. Waterfowl and landbirds. Depart 8 AM from the Parole P&R. Leader: Paul Fofonoff, 410-867-7971.

Sunday, April 2

H Talbot. Ferry Neck. Resident and migrant landbirds and waterfowl. Breakfast host: Jean and Ralph Crump. Depart 7 AM St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank, St. Michaels. Leader: Harry Armistead, harryarmistead@hotmail.com.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding. No designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Tuesday, April 4

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. From I-695 north of the city, take exit 23 south, I-83 Jones Falls Expy. Exit at North Ave and proceed east (left), get in left lane, go to traffic light at Falls Rd. Go left (north) on Falls Rd, right lane. Just after Lake Ave traffic light, turn right (east) at south end of Falls Rd bridge. Follow tight curve to right, go 0.5 mile through streamside woods to intersection. Park and walk to footbridge. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

H Indicates Field Trip

MEETING. **Baltimore.** "Sparrows: Identifying Little Brown Birds" by *Walter Ellison*, State Coordinator of the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas Project. 7:30 PM, Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Info: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, April 5

H Washington. Owls and Woodcocks. Meet 5 PM at the Windy Hill Restaurant in Clear Spring for dinner. Afterwards, meet 6:30 PM at Blair's Valley boat ramp. Leader: Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718.

MEETING. **Carroll.** Program TBA. 7:30 PM at the Senior Center, Stoner Ave, Westminster. For more info, contact Tammy Schwaab, 410-857-4913.

Thursday, April 6

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. 2 hrs. First in a series of four Thursday walks in April. Watch spring progress with a delightful variety of flowers, trees, and bushes along Cylburn's nature trails. Meet 11 AM at front of mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. For add'l info, contact Dwight Johnson, 410-366-7239.

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Wil Hershberger* will give another one of his stimulating presentations with great photography. 7 PM in the Community Rm at the C. Burr Artz Library in downtown Frederick. Call Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098, for info.

Friday, April 7

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Ospreys in the Chesapeake Bay" by *Steve Cardano*. 8 PM. Hosts: Peter Hanan and Janelle Dietrich. Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Info: Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336.

Saturday, April 8

H Allegany. Garrett County Ponds. Meet 9 AM at Parkside School in LaVale. Pack a lunch for an impromptu picnic at New Germany SP if we don't freeze first! Leader: Roy Brown, 301-724-7769.

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H Harford. Harmony Church Rd (eastern Harford Co). Join leaders Russ Kovach and Tom Gibson for a leisurely stroll along this quiet and scenic county road. Great time to send off winter songbirds and greet the first of the incoming northbound migrants. Meet at the intersection of MD 136 and Harmony Church Rd at 7:30 AM. Contact Russ at 443-386-4787 for more info.

H Montgomery. Banshee Reeks, Loudoun Co, VA. Three-quarters day. Join Friends of Banshee and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy for regularly scheduled walk. Trip may continue to other sites at option of leader and participants. Meet 8 AM. From Leesburg, take Rte 15 south. Approximately 0.25 mile south of the Leesburg Bypass, turn left (east) onto Evergreen Mill Rd (Rte 621) and proceed south about 5 miles. Turn right onto The Woods Rd (Rte 771) and proceed for about 1 mile to the entrance to Banshee Reeks on the left. Reservations not required. Leader: Joe Coleman, 540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com.

H Anne Arundel. TNC Nanjemoy Creek Preserve, Charles Co. Half day. Gerald Winegrad has made special arrangements for us to visit this important Nature Conservancy preserve to view the approximately 1,000 nesting Great Blue Herons. We will also look for other birds in the area. Depart 8 AM from Parole P&R. Reservations required. Limit 15. Contact Gerald, 410-280-8956, to make reservations.

H Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. Diverse habitat that includes stream, woods, and fields. Expect to see a variety of resident and migrant birds. Meet 8 AM. Directions: from I-695, take Exit 29A, Cromwell Bridge Rd. Turn north (away from the city) onto Cromwell Bridge Rd. At 1.3 miles, turn left at the "Sherwood Farm entrance." Follow entrance road, then turn right at the sign to the Willow Grove Farm parking lot. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

Saturday-Sunday, April 8-9

H Frederick. Eastern Shore Overnight. A trip to visit various Eastern Shore sites, including Deal Island, E.A. Vaughn, Taylors Landing, Irish Grove, and Assateague, looking for spring migrants and local residents. Meet 6 AM Sat at the Rte 75 P&R, just south of I-70. For details contact trip leader, Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098.

Sunday, April 9

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding. No designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Talbot. Hope House, Tunis Mills. This habitat serves numerous woodland species, and it is one of the few places in Talbot Co where Red-headed Woodpeckers are occasionally seen. No breakfast. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leader: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169, lroslund@bluecrab.org.

Tuesday, April 11

MEETING. **Allegany.** *George Jett* will present "A Snapshot of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, TX—Going Digital." George has switched to digital photography and took his new toy to one of North America's best birding areas during peak migration. Come share this photographic experience at the most popular birding locations in the Rio Grande Valley. 7 PM at Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland. Located across the street from the Board of Ed. Bldg. Contact: J.B. Churchill, 301-697-1223 or jchurchi@atlanticbb.net for info.

MEETING. **Kent.** "Orioles—Who's Who and What Is a Species?" by *Dr. Kevin Omland* of the University of MD. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 4 listing. Leader: Matilda Weiss, 410-337-2732.

Thursday, April 13

MEETING. **Howard.** "Australian Ms. Adventures: The Great Kingfisher Quest," by *Elayne and Jeff Metter*. The presentation will describe how to do a leisurely-paced trip to Australia, with an emphasis on watching and photographing birds. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-997-5336.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. 2 hrs. Second in a series of four Thursday walks in April. See Apr 6 listing.

Friday, April 14

H Carroll. Audrey Carroll Audubon Sanctuary. No better time to look for the American Woodcock than when they're doing their courtship display. Meet 6:30 PM at the Mt. Airy P&R located on Rte 27, north of I-70. For more info, contact Bob Ringer, 410-549-6031.

Saturday, April 15

H Tri-County. Nassawango Creek Preserve. Swamp forest resident birds and early migrants. Meet 7:30 AM at Asbury United Methodist Church (east parking lot adjacent to Wesley Dr), Salisbury. Leader: Betty Pitney, 410-543-1853.

H Montgomery. Bird Pedal. Half day. Leisurely ride with frequent stops for birding along the Mt. Vernon Trail beside the Potomac River in VA. Start at the Daingerfield Island parking lot next to the sailing marina, cycle through Alexandria on the designated trail-streets, end with birding at Dyke Marsh. Ten miles round trip on smooth level surfaces. Coffee break on return at Firehook Bakery. Reservations required. Contact leader, Dave Winer at 301-229-8963, for start time.

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Ft. McHenry. A continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Meet 8 AM at the Visitor Center. Cancelled in bad weather (high winds, fog, rain, snow). Directions: from I-695 southwest of the city, take exit 11, I-95, north towards the city, to exit 55, Hanover St. Turn east (right) on McComas St, left (north) on Key Hwy. First left at Lawrence St and left onto Fort Ave. Continue through gateway into the park. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Sunday, April 16

H Talbot. Easton Stream Bottoms. Search for waterthrush and more. No breakfast. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding. No designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Tuesday, April 18

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 4 listing. Leader: Dot Gustafson, 410-584-9509 or dotsg@bcpl.net.

Wednesday, April 19

MEETING. **Montgomery.** *Gwen Brewer and George Jett* will present "Birds and Bats in the Brazilian Amazon." Explore the biodiversity of western Brazil through photographs from a 12-day, 500-mile journey by boat down the Amazon and its tributaries. Over 200 species of birds and 28 species of bats were identified in the flooded forests. 7:30 PM, Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, April 20

MEETING. **Caroline.** Speaker and program TBA. 7:30 PM at Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

MEETING. **Talbot.** 7:30 PM. *Ray Bivens* from DNREC will present "History and Herons of Pea Patch Island." Today Pea Patch Island is a DE state park, protected for its historical past and because it supports a heron rookery, the largest north of FL. The talk will provide background for all who plan to attend the club's May 13 trip to the island. Easton Welcome Center (upstairs), South Harrison St, Easton.

H Anne Arundel. Poplar Island Tour. Poplar Island, which is being restored to its former 1,100 acres, hosts a large number of waterfowl, shorebirds, and landbirds. Depart from Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot at 7:30 AM. Reservations required. Limit 24. Leader George Thomas, 410-647-5082. We will be returning to Tilghman Island by 2 PM, so remember to bring drinks and a lunch.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. 2 hrs. Third in a series of four Thursday walks in April. See Apr 6 listing.

Saturday, April 22

H Cecil. North East and Elkton Town Parks. Meet 7 AM at Big Elk Mall (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

H Harford. Girls-Gone-Wildflower. The club once again returns to the Abingdon area and the often overlooked Stoney SF to witness its impressive assortment of wildflowers and early migrants. Led by experienced birders Jean Wheeler and Carol Flora and wildflower guru Colleen Webster. Meet 7 AM at the McDonald's parking lot near the intersection of Rtes 7 and MD 543 (Riverside Shopping Center). Contact Jean Wheeler, 410-879-7424, for more info.

H Montgomery. Blue Mash Nature Trail. Very birdy site. Waterproof boots essential. Meet at 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call leader for

reservations and directions. Trip limited to 8-10 participants. Leader: Mark England, 301-253-4139.

H Kent. Beginners' Bird Walk. 2 hrs. An Earth Day walk geared toward beginning birders, but all are welcome. Meet 9 AM at Eastern Neck NWR Hdqtrs. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205 or pmann@epl-inc.com.

H Howard. Blue Mash. Interesting walk at a very birdy site in Montgomery Co. Waterproof footwear essential. Contact Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361, for meeting place and time.

H BIG SIT. Frederick. Join us for our third annual Big Sit to raise money for the MD/DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Contact Linda Keller, 301-834-6977, or Lois Kauffman, 301-845-6690, for further info and to sign up.

H Baltimore. Hughes Hollow and Blue Mash. Visit 2 sites in Montgomery Co. Hughes Hollow is a freshwater marshy site with possible nesting Prothonotary Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, both Orioles, Green Heron, and possible migrant rails. Blue Mash has a mix of fields, woods, and ponds for Tree Swallows and other spring songbirds. Meet 7:30 AM at the Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8. Bring lunch. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Sunday, April 23

H Harford. Swan Harbor Farms. This county park on the Oakington Peninsula contains a mix of flooded and dry agricultural fields, deciduous woodlands, and brushy meadows. Great spot to search for Blue-winged Teal, Sora, and Horned Lark. Highlights could also include Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, and a mixed bag of early songbirds. Meet leader Dave Webb at the park hdqtrs

MOS Calendar (continued from page 23)

at the end of the entrance road at 7 AM. Contact 410-939-3537 for more details.

H Montgomery. Triadelphia Reservoir Area. Half day. Migrants in a variety of habitats. Starting time is 7:30 AM. Call leader for meeting place and directions. Limit 9. Reservations required. Leader: Hugh Mahanes, 301-564-0780 or hembuteo@comcast.net.

H Talbot. Izaak Walton League Forest and Surrounding Areas. Warblers, thrushes, and other woodland birds. Breakfast host: Wayne and Joyce Bell. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

H Carroll. Earthworks Festival at Bear Branch Nature Center. Come join the celebration and/or assist at the club's table during the festival. For more info, contact Bill Ellis, 410-781-7113.

H Baltimore. Patapsco Valley SP—Granite Area. Join the search for early migrants along the Patapsco River and neighboring forest. Several species of warblers and both orioles possible. Boots recommended. Meet 7:30 AM. From I-695 take Liberty Rd (Exit 18/MD Rte 26) west for 2 miles to Old Court Rd (MD Rte 125). Turn left on Old Court Rd, and drive 5.5 miles through Granite to the Patapsco River. Cross the bridge and park just beyond the railroad tracks. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding without a designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at Dusk in Hampden. See migrating Chimney Swifts as they pour into chimneys at the Bookbindery and/or the Mill Center. Meet 7:30 PM.

Come a bit earlier if the weather is cloudy or gray. Cancelled if raining. For more info and directions contact Carol Schreter, 410-664-5151, or Joan Cwi, cwijs@battelle.org.

Monday, April 24

MEETING. **Tri-County.** "Seabirds of the Maine Coast." 7 PM. Asbury United Methodist Church (Fox Rm, south entrance), Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, April 25

MEETING. **Washington.** "Wings and Things" presented by DNR Naturalist *Jacob Doyle*. Mt. Aetna Nature Center, 7:30 PM. Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 4 listing. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at dusk in Hampden. See Apr 23 listing.

Thursday, April 27

H Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. One-third day. Migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet 7 AM at Picnic Area #18, 0.5 mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Rd. Call leader for more information or specific directions. Reservations required. Leader: Rob Hilton, 301-587-6136.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. 2 hrs. Last in a series of four Thursday walks in Apr. See Apr 6 listing.

Friday, April 28

H Harford. Bird Banding. Grab a handful of in-hand photos with Mark Johnson and Les Eastman as they themselves grab handfuls of sparrows, warblers, and vireos from the nets of the Eden Mill banding station. Leisurely roadside hike through this scenic park along upper Deer Creek will follow after several net checks and a demonstration of the art and science of handling birds. Meet at the next lot up the road, about 0.5 mile north, of the Eden Mill House, at 7 AM. Contact Les at 410-734-6969 for details.

Saturday, April 29

H Allegany. CAREY RUN WORK DAY. 8 AM until you drop. Hard workers needed to come and help us out this year at the Carey Run Sanctuary in Finzel. Be sure to bring your picks and shovels. Yard tools such as rakes, shovels, and chainsaws will be useful. Bring a place setting and a covered dish to share for lunch. Beverages will be supplied. Take the Finzel exit from I-68 and turn left (south) until road dead ends. Then turn right and go straight at the fork. Make your first right turn onto the unpaved road. Cross the bridge and then turn right (look for MOS sanctuary signs). Contact: Barbara Gaffney, 301-895-4646, for info.

H Cecil. Seasons at Fair Hill: Spring. Meet 7 AM Fair Hill Nature Center, near Covered Bridge parking lot (parking lot fee required). Enter Fair Hill off Rte 273 and follow signs to the Nature Center. Leader: Meta Little, Meta368@juno.com.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. Enjoy the early spring wildflowers and migrant songbirds that have made this park so popular with local naturalists. The bird list will likely include Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush, while flower enthusiasts can expect to see blooming trout lily, purple trillium, and jack-in-the-pulpit. Meet leader Rick Cheicante at the Rock Run Mill at 7 AM for best looks at songbirds; late risers and flower peepers can meet there at 8 AM for a birding/natural history walk. Info: 410-803-2712.

H Frederick. Audrey Carroll. Dave Smith will show us the wonders of Audrey Carroll in the spring. We will look for warblers, sparrows, and other migrants. Meet 7 AM at Audrey Carroll. Call Dave, 410-549-7082, for info. Stick around after our walk and enhance your garden with items from the Audubon Native Plant sale that starts at 9 AM.

H Carroll. Morgan Run. Good time of year to look for spring migrants as well as breeding birds that have just arrived. Moderate terrain. Meet 8 AM at the parking lot on Ben Rose Ln, Eldersburg. Leaders: Greg Klein, 410-840-9384, and Laura Tarbell, 410-857-1109.

H Anne Arundel. Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot Co. Full day. This sanctuary consists of a variety of natural habitats including hardwood forest, freshwater, brackish marsh, and a mile of shoreline on a deep water tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. Mark Scallion, Director, will lead us around the sanctuary for what should be very productive birding. Meet at the Bay 50 Shopping Center lot at 7 AM. Bring a lunch. Leader: Peter Hanan, 410-672-5672.

H Baltimore. Breakfast with the Birds at Cylburn Arboretum. Co-hosted by Cylburn Arboretum Association. Breakfast at 8 AM, fee \$5. Birding starts at 8:30 AM. For reservations, call 410-367-2217.

H Baltimore. Marriottsville Warblers. Resident warblers include Prothonotary and Worm-eating. Yellow-throated Warbler and Barred Owl also possible. Meet 8 AM. From I-695 exit 18 (Liberty Rd), go west 4.9 miles to Marriottsville Rd. Turn left 4 miles past quarry and rifle range to unmarked, narrow road with mailboxes, just before bridge. Turn right, continue to small unpaved parking lot on left. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652, or myconut@msn.com.

Sunday, April 30

H Harford. Harford Glen. Experience the Glen at its peak as leaders Lynn Davis and Betsy Reeder guide us through the marshes, fields, and forests of this perennial club favorite. Always a productive location; an impressive species list can be expected, including shorebirds, warblers, and other songbirds. Meet at the mansion house at 7 AM. Contact Lynn, 410-569-0504, for more info.

H Montgomery. Dry Seneca Creek Horse Trails and Turf Farm Shorebirds. Two-thirds day. Start the day at Riley's Lock (Seneca) with a quick scan of the river and then explore some brushy riparian habitats along Dry Seneca Creek for migrants and breeders. After a lunch break, we'll head up to Patton Turf Farm area to look for migrating shorebirds. Shorebird portion of the trip may be cancelled if it has been especially dry. Come for one or both parts of trip. Meet 7 AM at Riley's lock. Scopes helpful. Bring lunch. Limit 8-10. Reservations required. Leader: Andy Martin, 301-294-4805 or apmartin2@comcast.net.

H Talbot. Pickering Creek Audubon Center. Visit mudflats for shorebirds and a variety of other habitats. No breakfast. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leader: Mark Scallion, 410-770-4585 or mscallion@audubon.org.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding without a designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Tuesday, May 2

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 4 listing. Leader: Shirley Geddes, 410-377-6583 or sgeddes@mindspring.com.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** *Gene Scarpulla* will present "Restoration at Hart-Miller Island." 7:30 PM, Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Info: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, May 3

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Dave Harvey* will present this year's "Final Exam." 7:30 PM at the Senior Center, Stoner Ave, Westminster. For more info, contact Laura Tarbell, 410-857-1109.

Telling Tales



When I opened the door to let in a New Year's Eve guest, two birds suddenly appeared on the doorstep. It was the pair of Carolina Wrens that live around here. Apparently they had been roosting in the wreath on the door and fell out when I opened it. One of them flew out and away, but the other flew into the living room. I tried to open a window and gently shoo it out, but it was not cooperating. Finally, it settled on the very top of the Christmas tree. Everyone, including the bird, froze for a long moment, then it flew out the still-open front door. The last bird of 2005, and the most striking tree ornament I have ever seen.

—John McKittrick, Howard County
MDOsprey

Thursday, May 4

H Montgomery. Flag Ponds, Calvert Co. Two-thirds day. Local expert Arlene Ripley leads us through woods, bog, and beach of this limited-access nature park to see migrants as well as arriving breeders, notably Yellow-throated Warbler, as well as such spring flora as showy orchis. Limit 12. Reservations required. Coordinators: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252, and Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136.

H Washington. Sideling Hill to search for spring warblers. Call leader Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718, for start time and meeting place.

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Larry and Jean Fry* will present "Birding Great Britain—The Shetland Islands and Wales." 7 PM in the Community Rm at the C. Burr Artz Library in downtown Frederick. Call Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098 for add'l info.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 25)**Friday, May 5**

MEETING. **Harford.** Speaker TBA. 7 PM at the Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 and MD 136.

H Montgomery. Pennyfield Lock, C&O Canal. Half day. Birding by ear (with scheduled intervals for talking). Migrant and nesting landbirds. Meet at the end of Pennyfield Lock Rd at 7 AM. Reservations required. Leaders: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226, and Ann Lucy, 301-229-8810.

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Horseshoe Crabs and Shorebirds in Delaware Bay" by *Gerald Winegrad*. 8 PM. Hosts: Wafi Rains and Bobbi Reichwein. Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Info: Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336.

Saturday, May 6

H Montgomery. Upper Watts Branch, Rockville. Half day. Migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, and assorted woodland residents, including possible Red-shouldered Hawks. Meet 8 AM at corner of Princeton Pl and Fordham St. Limit 12. Reservations required. Leader: Paul O'Brien, 301-424-6491.

H FRED ARCHIBALD MAY COUNT/ BIRDATHON. Frederick. Meet 6 AM at the Sanctuary. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or rjs30@erols.com, for further info.

H Anne Arundel. Calvert Co. Full day. We will be visiting a number of prime birding locations in Calvert Co looking for migrants, resident birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. There is a good chance of seeing Red-headed Woodpecker. Meet 6:30 AM at Parole P&R. Bring lunch. Leader, Nick Nicholson, 410-721-4814.

H Baltimore. Soldiers Delight. Warblers, flycatchers, and tanagers are featured as spring migration heats up in this globally rare ecosystem. Meet 7:30 AM. From I-695, take exit 18 west, Liberty Rd, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go 2 miles to historical

marker, overlook, and gravel lot on left. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6849 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Baltimore. Patterson Park (at the White House). Migrants found in this urban park have included Blue-headed, Red-eyed, White-eyed, and Warbling Vireos, as well as Wood, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Veery, Summer Tanager, Merlin, and Woodcock! Meet 8 AM. From downtown Balt., drive east up Pratt St, go left onto S Patterson Park Ave, and park in the first or second block. The White House (27 South Patterson Park Ave) is just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of South Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. Leader: Dave Curson, 410-675-4963.

Sunday, May 7

H Cecil. Cecil Warblers. A mix of hotspots for spring migrants. Meet 7 AM at Big Elk Mall (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leader, Marcia Watson-Whitmyre, mww@udel.edu.

H AUDREY CARROLL MAY COUNT/ BIRDATHON. Frederick. Meet 6 AM at the Sanctuary. Call Dave Smith, 410-549-7082 for further info.

H Montgomery. Little Bennett RP. Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Contact the leader for time and directions. Reservations required. Leader: Gemma Radko, 301-607-4374.

H Talbot. Tuckahoe SP and Adkins Arboretum. Stream bottoms to uplands for a variety of migrants. Bring lunch. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leaders: Bill and Karen Harris.

H Carroll. Mckeldin. It's time for spring warblers and we're sure to find a variety here. Moderate to rough terrain. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot on the west side of Marriottsville

Rd just south of the bridge over the Patapsco River (by the railroad tracks) in Henryton. For more info, contact Leader: Bob Ringle, 410-549-6031.

H Anne Arundel. Jug Bay Wetlands. Half day. Migrant song birds, resident birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Depart 7 AM Parole P&R. Leader: Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336.

H Baltimore. Patuxent North Tract (Research Refuge). Trip to PG Co site for Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, chat, and other southern specialty birds. Prothonotary Warbler possible. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8. Leader: Steve Sanford, 410-922-5103 or scartan@verizon.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding without a designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Spring Butterflies at Soldiers Delight. Butterfly expert Dick Smith will lead us through this globally rare ecosystem. In addition to spring butterflies such as the orange falcate and eastern pine elfin, expect many native grasses and flowers. Meet 1 PM. From I-695, take exit 18 Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go approximately 1 mile to the Soldiers Delight Visitor/Nature Center on left. Cancelled if raining. Call or e-mail to confirm date. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

Tuesday, May 9

MEETING. **Kent.** Speaker and program TBA. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 4 listing. Leader: Ruth Culbertson, 410-825-1379.

H Indicates Field Trip

WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING

Matt Hafner will again be heading up the MOS team, the Maryland Yellowthroats, in the World Series of Birding in New Jersey. The other members of the team will be Hans Holbrook, Jim Brighton, and Zach Baer.

H **Montgomery.** Beach (Drive) Birding in Montgomery Co. Deep in the heart of suburbia, we will comb the lower Montgomery Co section of Rock Creek Park for cuckoos, hummingbirds, orioles, vireos, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and other migrants. Meet 6:30 AM. Call leader for reservations and directions. Limit 8. Leader: Howard Youth, 301-915-0071 or howard.youth@starpower.net.

Thursday, May 11

H **Montgomery.** Patuxent River Drift Boat Trip, PG Co. Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Peak migration time for songbirds; also marsh and waterbirds. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent advisable. Read ANS *News* for directions to the park. Meet 6:30 AM at park entrance gate. A Patuxent Park participant fee may be collected. Reservations required. Leader: Paul DuMont, 703-931-8994.

Friday, May 12

H **Baltimore.** Poplar Island. See Mar 17 listing.

Saturday, May 13

H **MAY COUNT.** Cecil. Coordinator: Parke John, parke@del.net.

H **MAY COUNT.** Tri-County. Everyone can participate! Contact Ellen Lawler for checklists and details, 410-546-9056.

H **MAY COUNT.** Allegany & Garrett. To participate in Allegany Co and get directions to tally rally, contact J.B.

Churchill, 301-689-8344 (h), 301-697-1223 (w), or jchurchi@atlanticbb.net. To participate in Garrett Co, contact Fran Pope, 301-334-4908 or fpope@gcnetmail.net. Tally rally will be held at J.B.'s house in Frostburg on Mon, May 15 at 7 PM.

H **MAY COUNT.** Montgomery. A good excuse to count in your atlas block! Compiler and contact: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185 or warblerick@aol.com.

H **MAY COUNT.** Washington. Contact Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718, to participate.

H **MAY COUNT.** Kent. An all-day effort to census all birds in Kent Co. Join a field party or count in your neighborhood. Contact one of the leaders for details. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205 or pmann@epl-inc.com.

H **MAY COUNT.** Howard. Contact Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

H **MAY COUNT.** Frederick. Join the crowd for our local countywide count. Contact Mike Welch, 301-874-5828, to assist.

H **MAY COUNT.** Carroll. Count birds in your backyard, in your neighborhood, or at your favorite birding spot in Carroll Co. All input welcome and important to the bird club. Please coordinate locations with Bill Ellis at 410-781-7113. Join the tally rally at the home of Jerry and Laura Tarbell at 7 PM. RSVP to the Tarbells at 410-857-1109. Food or \$ donation, please.

H **MAY COUNT.** Anne Arundel. Take part in this statewide count by counting in your own county. Please call Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336, to let her know where you are counting, to avoid duplicating efforts.

H **MAY COUNT.** Baltimore. All-day count of birds in Balt. City and Co. For area assignments, call compiler Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

H **MAY COUNT.** Queen Anne's. Compiler: Glenn Therres, 410-643-7422.

H **MAY COUNT.** Dorchester. Compiler: Harry Armistead, 215-248-4120, harryarmistead@hotmail.com.

H **MAY COUNT.** Somerset. Compiler: Charles Vaughn, 410-742-7221 or essc@comcast.net.

H **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Ft. McHenry. See Apr 15 listing.

H **Talbot.** Pea Patch Island, DE. Joint trip with Caroline Bird Club. Largest heron rookery north of FL. Also includes a tour of Historic Fort Delaware. Cost \$8 per person for the boat ride and program at the fort. Bring lunch. We expect to be back in Easton by 5 PM. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton.

Birding Indoors

"Audubon's Dream Realized: Selections from *The Birds of America*," will be on display at Washington's National Gallery of Art's West Building through March 26, 2006. (Sixth and Constitution, NW.) The exhibit includes 47 hand-colored etchings from one of only two known complete sets in their original, unbound state. The exhibit also includes a new gift to the Gallery, an Audubon oil painting of "Osprey and Weakfish."

BOOK REVIEW

National Geographic Complete Birds of North America, edited by Jonathan Alderfer • *National Geographic Books*



Ours is a love-hate relationship. The concept and contents of this “ultimate birding reference book” are admirable. Alas, the binding is way too tight: Opening the book, rather than being a pleasure, is darned annoying; you have to wrestle it flat to get a good look at details along the inner margins. (How can an outfit with the

publishing expertise of National Geographic get snagged like this?)

Mechanics aside, this is a fine compendium. Smoothly written and generously illustrated, it covers all 962 species, even the rarest migrant, recorded in (the ABA’s) North America through September 2005. It contains some 4,000 illustrations (a few by Michael O’Brien), 150 full-color photographs, and more than 750 updated range and migration maps.

The text, completely new, was written by 24 of the country’s top field ornithologists (Marshall Iliff weighs in on Emberizids)—though this book omits any biographical information on the authors. The book’s editor, author and bird artist Jonathan Alderfer, is a former member of the MD/DC records committee. Then there’s the curious case of Jon Dunn. The dust jacket carries his photo and credits him as associate editor; the book itself (and accompanying publicity materials) never mention his name (except as author of two family accounts, Hoopoes [!] and Old World Flycatchers.)

The book is organized by family groups; each of 82 bird families is introduced with an overview essay by one (usually) of the authors. For me, these succinct and informative perspectives—detailing structure, plumage, behavior, distribution, taxonomy, and conservation—are one of the

book’s most appealing features. That same author then proceeds with the species accounts for that particular family: an introductory paragraph leads into treatment of identification, similar species, voice, status and distribution, and population. Brevity precludes depth; still, each account is packed with information. Too bad that a promised “quick-find index on the back endpapers” is missing.

Sprinkled throughout are identification sidebars as well as migration maps. “Judging Shape and Proportions on Juvenile Pluvialis Plovers,” for example, could be helpful for those trips to the potato fields on the Eastern Shore. Or take a look at “Flight Identification of Long-eared and Short-eared Owls.”

Photos—some spectacular (see the Cave Swallows)—illustrate each family account and most of the ID sidebars. Most of the artwork derives from National Geo’s Field Guide (4th edition), but new art was painted expressly for 73 accidental and 4 extinct species.

At 346 pages, 7x12x2 inches and nearly 4 pounds, *Complete Birds of NA* is, as Alderfer readily acknowledges, “too big to be a field guide.” Rather, he envisions it “residing on bookshelves and car seats, ready to be consulted when a field guide doesn’t provide enough information.” That sounds just about right.

Any ornithological quibbles I will leave to the ornithologists—and make appropriate notations in the margins. Meantime, I’ve resigned myself to its unwieldy design. This book, which arrived under the Christmas tree (two copies, in fact), is auditioning for a permanent spot on my desktop, right up there with Roget’s *Thesaurus*.

Complete Birds of NA retails for \$35; Amazon is offering it at \$23.10.

—Lydia Schindler

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

LAST CALL

...for Posters for the June convention.

If you would like to share the results of any research on the natural history of Maryland bird life—banding activities, hawk watches, even small research projects—present it in poster format during the Wine and Cheese Social at Rocky Gap on June 10. For more information, get in touch with Research Committee Chair Gwen Brewer as soon as possible: 301-843-3524 or glbrewer@comcast.net.

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SOCIETY, INC.

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